

Overlooked:



Tasmanian Aborigines in the First World War

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Front Cover image: Private John Fisher (40th Battalion) and Private Marcus Brown (40th Battalion) from Cape Barren Island. Both men were killed in action during 1917.

This thesis contains images of Aboriginal people who are now deceased.

In Memoriam

**Mark, soldier Mark, far away from Cape Barren you sleep,
far away, 'neath alien flowers and alien winds that weep.**

**You volunteered for war, Mark and nobly your life laid down.
You unto death were faithful, and yours the hero's crown.**

'Until the day breaks and the shadows flee.'¹

¹ Printed in the *Examiner* 11 June 1918, p1 in The Memoriam notices for Private Marcus Brown by his aunt – L. J. Everett of Grove

Statement of Originality:

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Date: 6 October 2015

Abstract

This thesis examines the enlistment and contribution of Tasmanian Aboriginal soldiers to the first Australian Imperial Force. It also considers how they were treated both in the front line, and on their return to Australia.

On 20 October 2014, Tasmanians will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the departure from Hobart of the troopships *Geelong* and *Katuna*. On board the *Geelong* as a young sergeant allotted to the 12th Battalion was Alfred Hearps, a nineteen year old clerk from Queenstown. Young 'Jack' (as he was known to his family) would be the first of 74 Tasmanian Aborigines to volunteer for service with the first Australian Imperial Force. Men came from all walks of life and from all over Tasmania to enlist when the recruiting offices opened in mid-August 1914. Over the four years that the war was prosecuted, 18 men from the small island community of Cape Barren Island would volunteer. Seventeen of these men were Straitsmen, the descendants of the sealers who settled on the Bass Strait islands with the Aboriginal women they took as 'wives' and with whom they raised children. A further thirteen Aboriginal men from nearby Flinders Island would also enlist along with eight grandchildren of Fanny Cochrane Smith. A total of 34 descendants of Dalrymple Briggs would also enlist – most, with the exception of three, coming from Aboriginal communities in the north and north-west of Tasmania. Four men from Kangaroo Island, off the coast of South Australia, were also included in this thesis, as they were the descendants of Betty Thomas, a Tasmanian woman who was probably taken there by sealers.

The number of Aborigines who managed to enlist is not great, perhaps 800 to 1,000 across Australia: nevertheless, they made a significant contribution to Australia's war effort. It is only in recent years that this contribution has been fully recognised, and that there has been a concerted effort to write them back into the Anzac legend. Dawes, Robson and White have all examined what drove men to enlist in the first Australian Imperial Force: but with very little evidence of any kind, it has been much harder for historians to suggest why Aborigines, who were essentially barred from enlisting (under Section 61 (h) of the *Defence Act of 1903*) would volunteer to fight for a country that had pushed them to the margins of society. While the founding fathers wanted a 'white army' for a White Australia following Federation, in actual fact the first Australian Imperial Force was ethnically diverse in its make-up.

Tasmanian Aborigines, in particular, are conspicuous by their very absence from the literature. Timothy Winegard was only able to add a now outdated figure at the last minute before his book on the contribution of Indigenous peoples from the British Dominions went to print in 2012. This thesis writes the contribution of Tasmania's Aboriginal soldiers back into the historical record to stand alongside the accounts emerging from other Australian states and territories.

It would appear that the Tasmanian Aboriginal men had little trouble in convincing the recruiting officers that if they were fit enough, they should be enlisted. This was not the experience of many Aboriginal men from mainland Australia, some of who were discharged soon after volunteering, with their records marked as being irregularly enlisted because they were not of 'substantial' European origin. However, once accepted, it would appear that the Australian Imperial Force was an 'equal opportunity employer' with all recruits given the same pay, clothing, equipment and rations based solely on rank. Yet while this was true of the early phase of their enlistment, statistical evidence would suggest that Aboriginal soldiers were not treated the same as settler Australian soldiers once in the front line. In order to examine this, four cohorts have been considered. The first comprises the 74 men from this study. Two further cohorts were derived from a one in five sample taken from the Letter B Database set up by Professor Kris Inwood of Guelph University, Canada – one of men born in Tasmania, the other of those born in mainland Australia. A fourth cohort is comprised of mainland Australian Aboriginal soldiers.

Rather than being 'over by Christmas' 1914, the war dragged on for four years, with the loss of over 63,000 Australian lives and a further 152,422 casualties. The Australian government was overwhelmed by the number of men and families requiring support upon their return to Australia. Given the fact that returned Aboriginal soldiers were once again marginalised when they returned home, many must have wondered whether the Repatriation system set up to take care of the needs of returning soldiers would treat them the same as settler Australian soldiers or whether they would suffer discrimination once more.

Acknowledgements

The idea of undertaking a study of the soldiers from Tasmania with Aboriginal heritage arose out of a conversation with military historian Dr Peter Stanley over a cup of coffee in Launceston following the AHA Conference in 2011. I had undertaken some preliminary research in an effort to try to establish just how many soldiers within a particular cohort may have had convict ancestry. To test this hypothesis a group of soldiers was selected from the Soldiers Memorial Avenue in Hobart. Tree no. 53 was planted in the memory of John William Miller, grandson of Fanny Cochrane Smith. His story sparked a conversation in which Peter Stanley suggested that a study of the indigenous men from Tasmania who volunteered for enlistment in First World War would add significantly to the existing body of knowledge.

My interest in military history stems in part from my time as Officer in Charge of the Medical Records Section of the Repatriation General Hospital, Hobart in the late 1970s. One of the greatest pleasures I derived from my job was the brief periods of time that I was able to spend on the wards talking with the patients – men who had served in both the First World War and World War II - listening to their stories. As they grew older many suffered terribly from the war wounds or illnesses, but were stoic to the end.

It also stems from my interest in family history and the fact that both my grandfathers served in the first A.I.F. along with two paternal great uncles who were killed in action. Both my parents went on to serve during World War II – my father in the R.A.A.F and my mother in the Australian Women's Army Service.

This thesis would not be possible without the help of many different people. First and foremost my supervisors Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart and Dr Kristyn Harman of the University of Tasmania for the many hours of help and sage advice that has got me through to submission. My thanks to Professor Kris Inwood of Guelph University in Ontario, Canada, for providing me with a copy of his 'B' List Database which has been useful for comparative purposes.

Many others have provided assistance along the journey, none more so than Mrs Frances Rhodes of Whitemark, Flinders Island, who kindly allowed me to access her collection of photographs and gave permission for me to use them in this thesis. Correspondence received several months ago from John Hearps in Canberra has led to some interesting exchanges about Alfred Hearps and the Hearps family and just how far Alfred and the 12th Battalion might have got following the landing at Gallipoli. My thanks also to Brenda Hodge who provided a number of photographs of the Kennedy brothers that have never been published, as well as Garry Kennedy from Melbourne, son of Gilbert Kennedy who was happy to share images of his father as well as other mementoes.

I would also like to thank Tony Brown from the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery who shared the beauty of Cape Barren Island with me and gave me some insight into life on the Island, the staff at the University of Tasmania Archives and the Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office for their assistance with accessing documents. Some of this research would not have been possible without the help of Garry Oakley and the staff of the research room at the Australian War Memorial, Ian McFarlane who kindly provided the map of Tasmania, the staff of the Mitchell Library (NSW), National Archives of Australia – Hobart Office and Canberra Office, the National Library of Australia, the Houses of Parliament Library in London and the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Last of all my thanks to my wonderful husband Ron (my copy boy) for his love and support as always.

If I have missed any member of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community who volunteered for service during World War 1, I apologise unreservedly, it was never my intention to do so and I will happily include them in any future work.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of all those who served and whose service has formed part of this research. I hope that now these men are no longer overlooked or under-represented in the Anzac story and that we can be proud of our Moonbird Diggers.

Definitions

Boer War	Also known as the 2 nd South African War 1899-1902. Troops from the different Australian colonies were sent to South Africa to fight against settlers of two independent Boer republics – the Orange Free State and the Transvaal Republic. An earlier war had been fought between 1880 and 1881. The term Boer is Dutch and Afrikaans for farmer but also refers to the Dutch speaking settlers of the Eastern Cape frontier in southern Africa.
Other Ranks	Refers to soldiers who are not officers – usually sergeant and below. They are also referred to as ‘rank and file’.
Coloureds	A term used for people of mixed ethnic origin who possess ancestry from Europe, Asia, and various Khoisan and Bantu peoples of Southern Africa.
‘Half-caste’	An outdated term for somebody of mixed racial parentage. The term is now considered offensive. This expression was used by all the mainstream newspapers in Tasmania at the turn of the century, and later as well as by the Tasmanian government, in correspondence and other papers relating to the indigenous people living on the Furneaux Group of islands, particularly Cape Barren Island. The latter were also referred to as sealers, islanders, Straitsmen (see below) or Bass Strait islanders. ¹

¹ I. Skira & R. Cosgrove *A Muttonbird in the Hand* Natural History 104.8 August 1995 [online]

Straitsmen

This was one of several names given to the inhabitants of the Furneaux Group of islands at the eastern end of Bass Strait. The two main islands are Flinders Island, the centre of local government and Cape Barren Island.

Colonial occupation of the islands began with the arrival of the sealers in the late 18th century, following the discovery of the sealing grounds in Bass Strait. These sealers were predominantly of European descent but also included Maori, Africans, indigenous Americans and people from continental Europe as well as the British Isles. They quickly reduced the seal population to a point where sealing became economically unviable. The sealers chose to remain on the island, eking out a living by bartering seal and wallaby skins, mutton birds and other produce to passing ships for spirits and other items. Some of these men took Aboriginal women as 'wives', with whom they raised children. By the second half of the 19th century these families formed a self-contained community.²

Mutton birds

Short-tailed shearwaters. The mutton birding industry in Tasmania dates back to around the 1830s when the sealing industry was drawing to a close. The harvesting of mutton birds was used by the islanders as a way of making a living. The feathers of the adult birds were used for mattress fill, the eggs for eating, and the fledglings for meat, oil and fat. Adult birds were also salted or smoked.³

² I. Skira 'I hope you will be my friend': Tasmanian Aborigines in the Furneaux Group in the nineteenth century – population and land tenure', *Aboriginal History Volume 21, 1997*, pp 30-31

³ Skira and Cosgrove, *A Muttonbird in the Hand*

Settler Australian

This term has been used to differentiate between the descendants from settler families and those of Aboriginal descent. The term settler Australians will be used throughout this thesis.

Table of Contents:

In Memoriam	p.i
Statement of Authorship	p.ii
Statement of Authority of Access	p.iii
Abstract	p.iv
Acknowledgements	p.vi
Definitions	p.viii
Maps	p.xii
Graphs	p.xii
Tables	p.xii
List of Illustrations	p.xiii

Introduction – The Great Silence	p.1
Chapter 1 – ‘Overlooked and underrepresented’	p.15
Chapter 2 – ‘A Dying Race’	p.22
Chapter 3 – On the eve of war	p.43
Chapter 4 – ‘The pure dinkum Aussies of the AIF were our Aborigine cobblers who donned khaki’	p.61
Chapter 5 - ‘The Australian is not inferior to others in stamina and fighting qualities....’	p.100
Chapter 6– Homeward bound at last! ‘The Repat will see me through’	p.135
Chapter 7 - Conclusion	p.158
Poem – ‘Black Anzacs’	p.167

Appendix A	p.168
------------	-------

Bibliography	p.177
--------------	-------

Maps:

Figure 1: Map of Tasmania	p.21
---------------------------	------

Figure 3: Western Front - 1914 -1918	p.57
--------------------------------------	------

Graphs:

Figure 2: Previous Military Experience	p.47
--	------

Figure 4: Enlistment by year – 1915-1918	p.72
--	------

Figure 5: Enlistment of Tasmanian Aboriginal Soldiers by Month from August 194 – Nov ember 1917	p.94
--	------

Tables:

Table 1: Disposal and Casualties	p.128
----------------------------------	-------

Table 2: Battle and Non-battle Casualties	p.129
---	-------

Table 3: Rates of Promotion	p.130
-----------------------------	-------

Table 4: Court Martial, Casualty and Venereal Disease Rates	p.131
---	-------

Table 5: Court Martial, Casualty and Venereal Disease Rates among Tasmanian Soldiers	p.132
---	-------

Table 6: Court Martial, Casualty and Venereal Disease Rates among Tasmanian Soldiers including labourers	p.133
---	-------

Illustrations:

Five Straitsmen – George Mansell, Sidney Burgess Sr., Thomas Mansell, Archie Mansell and Henry Brown	p.xv
George Fisher, John Fisher, Cecil Maynard and George Robinson	p.9
Grave of Private Augustus ‘Gus’ Smith and Military Cemetery at Church of St. George, Fovant	p.14
Straitsmen and women with Sir Henry and Lady Barron Taken on their visit to Cape Barren Island in 1911	p.39
Fanny Cochrane and William Smith	p.41
Nicholls Rivulet Football Team (1913)	p.42
The Governor of Tasmania Sir Henry Barron, Cpt and Mrs Bladon with Cape Barren Island school children in 1911	p.56
The First Contingent farewell parade through the streets of Hobart on 4 October 1914, prior to their departure.	p.58
Boarding the Geelong (A2) in preparation for its departure from Hobart on 20 October 1914	p.58
A formal image of the officers and N.C.O.’s ‘D’ Company 12 th Battalion taken prior to departure in October 1914	p.59
Pontville Army Camp in 1914 – where the men lived under canvas in bell tents	p.59
40 th Battalion troops on parade at Claremont Army Camp 1916, led by Lieutenant Colonel John Lord	p.60
Claremont Army Camp, with Claremont Railway Station In the foreground	p.60
John William Miller – killed in action on 25 April 1915	p.95
Stamford ‘Tiger’ Simpson in uniform	p.95
Postcard written by Claude Brown to his ‘Uncle Summers’	p.96

Postcard written by Thomas Mansell to his sister Winnie	p.96
James Vivian Mansell, served with the 52 nd Battalion	p.134
Frederick William Brown, wounded in action in April 1918	p.134
Julian Clifford Everett, returned to Australia in May 1918	p.156
Edward Lewis Maynard, killed in action on the Gallipoli Peninsula on 8 August 1915	p.156
Frank Maynard, killed in action at Pozieres in July 1916	p.157
Marcus Blake Norman Brown, died of wounds at Messines	p.157
Claude Eyre Brown, returned to Australia due to deafness	p.165
Henry George Brown – served with the 12 th Battalion	p.165
James Henry Paul Maynard, wounded in action in July 1918	p.166
William Henry Mansell – served with the 40 th Battalion	p.166



Five Straitsmen

Standing: George Enos Mansell, Sidney Burgess Sr, Thomas Edward Mansell

Sitting: Archie Douglas Mansell and Henry George Brown

Ref: M. Mallet, *My Past – Their Future: Stories from Cape Barren Island*, p40

Introduction

The Great Silence!

While reading Juliet Nicolson's book *The Great Silence*, in which she writes about loved ones coping with the aftermath of the First World War in the years between 1918 and 1920, it struck me that many Tasmanian families also suffered in silence in its aftermath, none more so than those who were of Aboriginal heritage who were already marginalised and living on the peripheries of society.¹ To date, the story of Tasmanian Aborigines who volunteered for service during the First World War has remained largely untold. As a result Tasmania's indigenous diggers have been excluded from the Anzac legend: hence the title of this thesis. The *Great Silence* has, in this case, a double meaning: the phrase usually refers to that time each year when, at 11 am on 11 November, Australians pause to remember the thousands of men and women who served in the defence of this country and in peacekeeping operations, many dying whilst on active service. But the 'silence' shrouding indigenous Tasmanian veterans of the First World War is an even deeper and arguably more palpable legacy.

This thesis argues that despite numerous legal, administrative, and socio-cultural obstacles, at least 74 men of Tasmanian Aboriginal heritage volunteered to serve in World War one, and that for a range of historic factors relating to class and race, before, during and after the war these men were not necessarily treated as the equal of other Australians.

Aborigines are to be found among the ranks of Australia's armed forces since the Boer War. While it is true to say that many did not rush to enlist during the First World War a considerable number of men volunteered for active service. They were also to be found in all theatres of war and services during World War II including the Australian Women's Army Service and as Coastwatchers, playing an important role in defending the 'Top End'.² Aborigines continued to serve during the 1950s and 1960s, stationed in Malaya, Korea, Borneo and then Vietnam. While attitudes towards the

¹ J. Nicolson, *The Great Silence: 1918-1920 Living in the Shadow of the First World War* (London, 2009)

² N. Riseman, 'Serving Their Country: A Short History of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service in the Australian Army' *Australian Army Journal, Culture Edition 2013*, Volume X, No. 3, pp.15-16

enlistment of Indigenous Australians into the armed forces have changed markedly since the First and Second World Wars, the percentage of Indigenous Australians in the Australian Defence forces remains very low at 1.1%, or 622 personnel, with a further 421 active in the reserves.³

As Australia observes the centenary of Anzac and pauses to reflect on its military history over the past one hundred years, the contribution of several thousand indigenous men and women who have proudly served their country in the Defence forces since the Boer War (South African War 1899-1902) should be appropriately commemorated.⁴ This should, I believe include the 70 soldiers of Tasmanian Aboriginal descent, who while not officially recognised as such at the time of their enlistment, continuing the 'officially sanctioned historical fiction' that the Tasmanian Aborigines were an extinct race, still made a contribution, serving in all areas of the first Australian Imperial Force (AIF).⁵ It should also include the four men from Kangaroo Island who were the grandsons of a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman.⁶

At the outbreak of the First World War, many politicians and others believed that most of Australia's non-white population i.e. Aboriginal and Asian populations, would soon die out, and any 'problems' associated with them would disappear. To secure Australia's borders the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 was passed. The 'White Australia Policy' as it became known, effectively excluded non-white migrants from gaining access to Australia, in an endeavour to 'save' the country from the creation of a racially-based underclass forced to live on low wages, living in sub-standard accommodation and generally undermining the egalitarian society that its Founding Fathers thought Australia should be. Australia already had an Aboriginal underclass that could not be deported under the legislation: yet nor were they considered Australian citizens at that time with any of the rights and privileges that went with that status. It would be two or three generations before all Aborigines were extended the rights and privileges of citizenship, and would be counted as full members of Australian society.

³ Interview with Lisa Phelps, head of the Department of Defence's Directorate of Indigenous Affairs with Sergei De Silva-Ranasinghe, *Policy* Volume 30 No. 1 Autumn 2014, p.45

⁴ Aborigines have served in all conflicts since the First World War. A small group were used as trackers during the Boer War

⁵ J. Chesterman and B. Galligan, *Citizens without Rights: Aborigines and Australian Citizenship*, (Cambridge, 1997), p.66; Names listed in Appendix A

⁶ R. Taylor, *Unearthed: the Aboriginal Tasmanians of Kangaroo Island* (Kent Town, 2002)

Such exclusions applied to the *Defence Act 1903-1914* which stated under Section 61(h) that persons who were 'not of substantial European origin or descent were exempt from service in time of war.' The medical personnel who had been appointed under the Regulations along with recruiting officers were the final arbiters, as to who was of 'sufficient' European descent to pass for enlistment.⁷ While Section 61 (h) does not mention any particular race or group, most historians believe that it was aimed at excluding Aborigines and possibly those of Asian parentage who might have wanted to enlist. Similar exclusions applied to the universal training scheme that commenced at the beginning of 1911, and was later adopted by the Royal Military College in 1914, to overcome an anomaly where admission had been limited to those who were natural-born British subjects, but not necessarily of 'substantial European origin or descent.'⁸

In 1911 as part of the Statistician's Report of the Census for that year, the then Commonwealth Attorney General provided an opinion which stated that a person, unless a 'full blood', was in fact not an Aborigine.⁹ This meant that Tasmania's indigenous people were not considered by the government to have been Aborigines at all. This may in part explain why they were more readily accepted in to the first A.I.F. than many Aborigines who volunteered on the mainland with many being considered 'full bloods' or simply too dark to be enlisted. According to Lancaster Jones, Tasmania did not have an Aboriginal population in 1901 and therefore did not need any legislation or governing body to control them. While the official position continued to be that the state did not have an Aboriginal population, in the years between Federation and the outbreak of war in 1914, two pieces of legislation were passed by the state government that did at least acknowledge the existence of a group of 'half-castes' living on Cape Barren Island. With the passing of Fanny Cochrane Smith in 1905, acknowledged by the state government as an Aboriginal woman, the Tasmanian Aborigines living on mainland Tasmania passed beyond government purview, no longer considered to be Aboriginal and in need of control.

⁷ The Defence Act 1903-1914- Regulations (Provisional) and Instructions for Universal Training (Melbourne, 1915) p.17 – hereafter referred to as the Defence Act 1903-1914; H. Smith 'Minorities and the Australian Army: Overlooked and Underrepresented?' in P. Dennis and J. Grey eds, *A Centenary of Service: 100 Years of the Australian Army*, proceedings of the 2001 Chief of Army's Military History Conference, Army History Unit (Canberra, 2001), p.3 online version

⁸ H. Smith 'Minorities and the Australian Army: Overlooked and Underrepresented?', p.3

⁹ G. H. Knibbs, *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia* Volume 1, Statistician's Report, p.51

Once war was declared on 4 August 1914, war fever spread throughout Australia and the race was on to be among the first to enlist and not miss out on the big adventure that was in the offing. Among those rushing to enlist were Alfred Hearps, from the remote mining town of Queenstown on Tasmania's west coast, Hurtle Patterson from Rosewood in Queensland and Alfred Bolton from Randwick, New South Wales. Three men of Aboriginal descent who had volunteered and had enlisted before the end of August. What truly motivated most of Australia's Aborigines to enlist is shrouded in mystery especially given their lack of citizenship and the discrimination they faced under the various pieces of state legislation? This raises questions as to whether their motives were any different or any less complex than those of the settler Australians who fought alongside them. For every soldier there was arguably a different motive or set of motivating factors prompting the decision to enlist. While they may be grouped under broad headings such as those compiled by Lloyd Robson and John Dawes, each person had their own personal perspective: so too did Tasmania's Aboriginal enlistees.¹⁰

While there is scant evidence to suggest any motivating factors for the Tasmanian Aborigines, in at least one instance it was felt that it was the person's duty to enlist and would have done so again if required.¹¹ For other Aborigines, it may have been a chance to secure citizenship for themselves, to escape the peripheral conditions in which they were forced to live, or simply the chance to secure a job with regular pay. None, it seems kept a diary: and few of the letters written home have survived the intervening years. Correspondence that has survived does not seem to mention anything about the factors that motivated the author to enlist in the first place.¹²

Despite the barriers to enlistment, it has been estimated that around a thousand or maybe more Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders joined the lines of men at recruiting depots around the country intent on volunteering to enlist

¹⁰ J.N.I. Dawes and L. L. Robson, *Citizen to Soldier: Australia before the First World War* (Blackburn, 1977)

¹¹ NAA P107/37 Pension File C6190 Claude Eyre Brown, #6477 private 12th Battalion

¹² Among items held at the Furneaux Museum at Emta is a silk souvenir card sent to May Goer by her brother William Maynard while at Larkhill, Durrington in March 1917, F.H.R.A.:1996 D:78

in the Army to defend the country.¹³ Ongoing genealogical and other research being currently being undertaken in an endeavour to establish the number of Aboriginal enlistments.¹⁴ Initially those who were deemed 'white enough' managed to get through, while others were rejected based on the colour of their skin until such time as 'half castes' were permitted to enlist in May 1917.¹⁵ This opened up opportunities for a number of Aborigines from northern Australia to enlist and they did so in considerable numbers.¹⁶ There were exceptions though, one being Douglas Grant, a 'full blood' Aborigine, who enlisted in January 1916 but did not embark for overseas until August that year, finally departing with the 13th Battalion.¹⁷ Grant has been described by Harry Gordon as a being more a white man, than an Aborigine, a Gaelic speaking 'black Scotsmen'¹⁸

The research for this thesis commenced several years ago and follows on from another research project to establish the percentage of men in the first Australian Imperial Force that were the descendants of Tasmanian convicts. As part of this research the antecedents of John William Miller who served and died with the 12th Battalion not only pointed to his having convict ancestry but also to his Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestry through his grandmother Fanny Cochrane Smith, a well-known Tasmanian Aboriginal woman and elder. Using the ground breaking genealogical work of Mollison and Everett, now considered by some of the Aboriginal community at least, to be rather contentious, as a starting point it was possible through the use of a range of genealogical records and service records available online and in public records to compile a list of names and service records by matching relevant data such

¹³ Pamphlet produced by the Department of Veteran's Affairs on behalf of the Australian Government: P. Scarlett, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteers for the AIF* (Macquarie, 2012) has put the number at around 800. This figure could be as high as 1,300

¹⁴ Among these is the work of those involved in Serving Our Country and the Indigenous Section at the Australian War Memorial

¹⁵ AIF Military Regulations Circular No. 113, 1917

¹⁶ R. Pratt, 'Queensland's Aborigines in the First AIF' *Sabretache*, Volume XXXI April/June 1990, p.18

¹⁷ NAA B2455, Personnel Dossier for No. 6020 Douglas Grant. An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* dated 2 September 1916, p.20 stated that he had been ready to go a couple of months ago when he had passed the sergeant's examination but that an unspecified regulation had prevented him from doing so, forcing him to remain behind until such time as permission had been obtained enabling him to leave the country. None of this is borne out in his personnel dossier or in any other official documentation, but seems to have been repeated by John Ramsland and Christopher Mooney who have quoted Coulthard-Clark et al.

¹⁸ H. Gordon, *The Embarrassing Australian: The Story of an Aboriginal Warrior* (Melbourne, 1962), p.29

as name, next of kin and age on enlistment. A complete list of names can be found in Appendix A.

A range of public records which included the births, deaths and marriage records compiled the Registrar General, and the Personnel Dossiers, War Gratuity Files and Repatriation Department (now Department of Veterans Affairs) records held by the National Archives of Australia were used extensively.¹⁹ A number of other documents and sources were also consulted, including newspapers and census records as well as a number of government records pertaining to Cape Barren Island. Whenever possible, documentary evidence of an Aboriginal ancestor was sought to establish the link to the soldier. Where it was not possible to find a birth record for each person (as not every event was registered), sufficient evidence was located to establish that each cohort member belonged to a given set of parents.

All the men of Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestry included in this study volunteered for enlistment with the first AIF.²⁰ In some cases an individual did not get past the medical examination process, but they have still been included, as have those who did not embark for overseas service after having deserted, or having volunteered late in 1918. In every case, with the possible exception of Ulbert Smith, the soldier's genealogy has been traced back to a Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestor.²¹ Oscar Vince appears in Philippa Scarlett's list of Aboriginal soldiers but has not been included as I could find no compelling evidence to suggest that he was of Aboriginal descent.²² Nor have I included the three Hite brothers for the same reason. It is entirely possible that further research might resolve this question.

The descendants of Betty and Nat Thomas from Kangaroo Island, South Australia have been included in this study, as they too are of Tasmanian Aboriginal descent. To date, it has not been possible to trace the descendants of John Briggs, brother of Dalrymple Johnson, formerly Briggs. This family moved to Victoria in the

¹⁹ B. Mollison and C. Everitt, *Tasmanian Aborigines and their Descendants (Chronology, Genealogies and Social Data) Part 2* (Hobart, 1978); NAA B2455/1 Series Personnel Dossiers for World War 1 soldiers

²⁰ A Personnel Dossier had been raised for each and is part of the B2455 Series held by National Archives of Australia

²¹ Some doubt surrounds Ulbert Smith whose name appears on the *Bringing Them Home* list. Although he was adopted and brought up in a settler colonial household, he is considered to have been of Aboriginal descent.

²² Tasmanian Heritage and Archives Office (TAHO)N PH30/1/9550, 9551, 9553 and 9557

1850s.²³ The same applies to Edward (Ned) Tomlin who left the Bass Strait islands and went to live on mainland Australia. Ned was the son of Poolrer-rener, a woman from the Trawl-wool-way bank of Cape Portland. When he moved to Cape Portland he was known to have been accompanied by his wife Nicerum-powerter of the Ben Lomond tribe. Another who went to Victoria, according to Felton, was Thomas Thompson. He was the son of Wottecowiddyer. When Thompson was about 13 years old he was taken to Victoria by George Robinson, and eventually went to work for a Mr Solomon who lived in the Dandenong ranges.²⁴

While every attempt has been made to locate the names and service records of all the men with Tasmanian indigenous heritage who volunteered there may well be other men who served in the Australian Imperial Force during the First World War, and who have not been identified despite careful scrutiny of a range of available records.²⁵ It is hoped to include them in a later work.

For comparative purposes and to establish whether there was any hard evidence as to whether Aboriginal soldiers were discriminated against or even marginalised whilst on active service, a number of tables were compiled and data analysis carried out. Four cohorts were formed, the first being based on the 74 men who form this study with the others formed in order to provide the study with comparative samples: one based on a 1 in 5 random sample derived from the names published in *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Volunteers for the A.I.F.*, the most comprehensive list published to date.²⁶ The remaining two cohorts were formed from random sampling of a database provided by Professor Kris Inwood of Guelph University, Canada, which contains records of all members of the first Australian Imperial Force whose surname began with the letter 'B'. One cohort was formed of those whose personnel dossier stated that they had been born in Tasmania: those included in the second had been born in other Australian states. Any Aborigines that appeared in either of the two letter 'B' samples were excluded.

²³ B. Mollison and C. Everitt, *Tasmanian Aborigines and their Descendants (Chronology, Genealogies and Social Data) Part 2* the Briggs Genealogy

²⁴ H. Felton, *Living with the Land: Aborigines in Tasmania. Book six: Continuity and Change*, (Hobart, 1991) pp.22-23

²⁵ Since writing this thesis the name of Richard Farrell who served with the 40th Battalion has been handed to the author

²⁶ P. Scarlett, *Australian and Torres Strait Islander Volunteers for the A.I.F.*

It was decided to include five Straitsmen in the study whom some might consider did not meet all the criteria laid down. These included Cecil Walter Leon Maynard who has been identified by Norman Tindale and Bill Mollison as being white, yet he grew up in an Aboriginal household alongside his Aboriginal siblings.²⁷ He is recognized by the local Aboriginal community, and as such, has been included: so too were George Collis Robinson and his brother, Horace Frederick Robinson. John and George Fisher have also been included because of their ties to the Aboriginal community through their grandmother Lydia Maynard who was the daughter of Richard Maynard.²⁸

Several historians, including Peter Pedersen, believe that Australian Aborigines were treated equally once in uniform, a view supported by some staff at the Australian War Memorial.²⁹ While all soldiers in the first Australian Imperial Force were given the same pay depending on their rank and regardless of the fact that they were Aborigines or Chinese or another non-European race, the same rations, uniform and equipment a soldier depending on whether they were mounted or dismounted troops. Statistical probability suggests, however, that there was a bias against Aboriginal promotion and that they were under-represented in the ranks above that of lance corporal. The men of Tasmanian Aboriginal descent are over-represented disciplinary reasons. A similar picture emerges in relation to the incidences of venereal disease.

²⁷ Mollison and Everitt, *Tasmanian Aborigines and their Descendants*; N. B. Tindale 'Results of the Harvard-Adelaide Universities Anthropological Expedition, 1938-1939. *Growth of a people: formation and development of a hybrid aboriginal and white stock on the islands of Bass Strait, Tasmania – 1815-1949*' Records of the Queen Victoria Museum Volume 2, 1953 (Launceston, 1953) p.45. Cecil is buried at Lady Barron as Cecil Walter Williams

²⁸ N. B. Tindale, *Growth of a People: formation and development of a hybrid aboriginal and white stock on the islands of Bass Strait, Tasmania 1815-1949*, p.50. Tindale states that Richard Maynard had various alias including Henry Maynard, Henry Todd and Bushby. His first wife was a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman from the Ben Lomond Tribe - Tindale, *Growth of a People* p.45

²⁹ P. Pedersen, *Anzacs on the Western Front: The Australian War Memorial Battlefield Guide* (Milton, 2012), p.39



George G. Fisher



John A. Fisher KIA



Cecil Walter L. Maynard



George Collis Robinson KIA

Illustrations 2 to 5: Four Straitsmen, whose Aboriginality has been questioned from time to time. Source: from the collection of Mrs Frances Rhodes, Whitemark, Flinders Island

The Present Study:

This thesis contributes towards filling in the missing pieces of the puzzle regarding Aborigines in the First World War, particularly those from Tasmania. It also aims to answer such questions as who were the indigenous men from Tasmania who volunteered for enlistment; what were the main motivating factors encouraging Aborigines who were marginalised and denied citizenship in their own country; what did they hope to gain from enlisting: and were their motives for enlistment any different to settler Australians? A second aim of this thesis will be to examine the available evidence regarding how were they treated in the front line: were their experiences any different from those whom they served alongside given that many considered Australia's indigenous peoples to be an 'inferior' race? Concluding questions revolve around their survival rates and their ability to access the range of benefits post-war provided under the Repatriation system of care.

It is logical to view the process of enlistment in the first Australian Imperial Force as a continuum, beginning with an 'Application to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force' and ending with a person's discharge.³⁰ Using this method, it is possible to demonstrate the points at which non-whites wishing to volunteer were open to discrimination. For some it was at the first hurdle, unable to complete the Application to enlist for a variety of reasons, including limited literacy skills, or to be passed as fit by the medical officer or accepted on account of the colour of their skin. The next one could come at any point during the initial training phase, prior to embarkation. Many mainland Aborigines returned to the training camp from their final leave only to be told that they being discharged as their enlistment was irregular, that they were 'not of substantial European origin or similar.

In 1931 a series of articles appeared in the official newsletter of the New South Wales RSL. This is the first time many Australians would have been made aware that indigenous Australians served in the first Australian Imperial Force. The topic would languish once more until being picked up by Chris Coulthard Clark in 1973. In **Chapter 1** the body of literature surrounding the enlistment of Aborigines in the defence of Australia, particularly during the First World War, will be explored. Whilst not a large body of work compared to other aspects of the First World War,

³⁰ Now NAA Series MT1486/1

particularly the Gallipoli campaign, it is slowly growing as more historians take an interest in this topic.

In **Chapter 2** I will explore the broad question of identity in relation to Aboriginality. By the close of the nineteenth century, there were four geographically-discrete Tasmanian Aboriginal groups. These can be broken down into three distinct groups: the descendants of Fanny Cochrane Smith living in the Channel district south of Hobart; the descendants of Dalrymple Johnson, scattered along the north-west coast; and the Straitsmen in the Furneaux Group of islands. Also on Kangaroo Island off the coast of South Australia were the descendants of Betty, a native of Tasmania, and her settler Australian husband Nat Thomas.

No sooner had the states federated than the federal government passed the Restricted Immigration Act of 1901. While this act was aimed at excluding non - Europeans from migrating to Australia, it also ensured that Australia's own indigenous people were excluded from becoming citizens. This meant that when a limited welfare state was introduced, they were shut out. Denied citizenship and the rights and privileges that came with it, Aboriginal youths and young men were also exempt from the universal cadet system that was introduced in 1911: but this did not stop many from answering the 'War God's anvil' in 1914-1918 and joining the colours that Bert Beros wrote about in his poem 'The Coloured Digger', with over 1,000 Australian Aboriginal men volunteering for service in the first A.I.F.³¹

These themes are explored in **Chapter 3** which, also explores the recent history of Cape Barren Island in the prelude to the outbreak of war. 'Citizenship and military service are closely linked': according to Hugh Smith, 'fighting for one's country is a duty of the citizen which goes alongside the rights he enjoys.' 'Since armies are national they have' in the past 'tended to exclude those who do not belong to the nation and share its values.'³² With the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act, the Federal government showed its determination to preserve a White Australia defended by an even whiter army. The Defence Act of 1903 required volunteers to be 'substantially of European origin or descent,' supposedly leaving no place for Aborigines and non-whites when the government called for volunteers on the

³¹ www.diggerhistory.info/pages-aboriginal/aboriginal (accessed 21 August 2013)

³² H. Smith, 'Minorities and the Australian Army: Overlooked and Underrepresented?' p.1

outbreak of the First World War. This did not stop Aborigines from volunteering, turning up to the recruiting depots soon after they opened.

In **Chapter 4** I consider how many men of Tasmanian Aboriginal heritage enlisted in the first Australian Imperial Force, as well as motivating factors in their enlistment. While many historians have viewed Section 61 (*h*) of the Defence Act 1903-1914 as being aimed at Aborigines, it could have equally applied to other non-European races, including the large Chinese communities based in Victoria and elsewhere.³³ Within days of the recruiting depots being opened, men who would be considered an Aborigine under the current working definition were stepping forward to be included. Based on the limited evidence available, among the earliest to do so was Alfred Hearps, a young nineteen-year-old clerk from Queenstown. 'Jack' Hearps as he was commonly known, was a descendant of Dalrymple Briggs.

Australian soldiers were often characterised as larrikins. It was said that they were not keen to follow the military conventions of saluting officers and had a propensity to go absent without leave. Once in combat though, they would also be seen by many as fierce fighters and the type of soldier you wanted on your side when going into battle. In **Chapter 5** I will try to determine how the Aboriginal soldiers were treated in the front line using the statistical evidence gathered to see if the claims that they were treated equally once there have any merit. In order to do so, I will make a detailed comparison of the rate at which soldiers of Aboriginal and settler descent were disciplined, promoted, killed in action and invalided home.

Life at the front was tough, with soldiers forced to fight and rest in very difficult conditions and to exist on a monotonous diet that was not conducive to maintaining even a reasonable standard of health. Those who had seen action on the Gallipoli Peninsula looked forward to the fabled green fields of France, but did not count on the bone-chilling wet and cold that was actual winter in northern France and Belgium, particularly after bombing and artillery barrages had caused considerable damage to the water table. The men suffered a variety of illnesses as well as being wounded in action.

With the signing of the Armistice, the war was not over for these men or their families as they began the hard journey back to home, and to try to pick up the threads of their pre-war lives. Prior to embarkation, the Federal Government

³³ The Defence Act 1903-1914, p17

promised to look after these men to see to their health requirements, and to provide them with pensions and much more, as an inducement to enlist. In **Chapter 7** I will examine how the 'Repat' system responded to the needs of the returning soldier, some with serious health problems including loss of a limb. Many Aborigines must have wondered whether the equality or otherwise they had experienced in the trenches would continue once they were back in Australia: would they be given the same benefits as the settler Australian including Soldier Settlement blocks; or would the old prejudices emerge once more?



Illustrations 6 and 7: The headstone erected for Private Augustus 'Gus' Smith and a view of the military cemetery behind the Church of St. George, Fovant, England. Smith was laid to rest here after dying from nephritis on 19 December 1919. Source: author, taken in 2012 on visit to England

Chapter 1

Overlooked and underrepresented

Much has been written about the first Australian Imperial Force that was formed in 1914. The number of books published over the last twenty or thirty years has grown substantially, with many titles coming out each year covering just about every aspect or topic associated with Australia's involvement in the First World War, particularly on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The plethora of literature will only burgeon as Australia and its First World War allies begin to observe the 100th anniversary of the First World War commencing in August 2014: this can be seen by the number of new titles and re-released books that have been published over the last twelve months alone.

One aspect of the war which was totally ignored for decades, but has been gaining the attention of historians over the last twenty years, is the different ethnic groupings within the Australian Imperial Force, beginning with Australia's indigenous diggers, as well as those of German, Russian or Irish heritage.¹ While most of these groups, such as the Russians for instance, only made up a small percentage of the total number, their very presence nevertheless demonstrates the ethnic diversity that existed within the Australian Imperial Force. More recently attention has turned towards Chinese-Australians who also served during the First World War.²

Peter Stanley challenges readers to look beyond the traditional Anzac legend of the past and to understand that the Australian Imperial Force was more ethnically diverse than many might have supposed.³ Yet despite this, Australian soldiers were also distinctly racist, particularly when it came to their relations with the inhabitants of non-white countries through which they passed, beginning with the men of

¹ For example – J. F. Williams, *German Anzacs and the First World War* (Sydney, 2003); E. V. Govor, *Russian Anzacs in Australian History* (Sydney, 2005) and J. Kildea, *Anzacs and Ireland* (Sydney, 2007)

² Alastair Kennedy is currently working on a book on Chinese-Australians in the First World War – see A. Kennedy, 'Outwitting Billy Hughes and the White Australia Policy: Chinese-Australians and the First World War' *Sabretache*, Volume LII No. 4, December 2012 pp.15-25

³ P. Stanley, 'He was Black, he was a White man, and a dinkum Aussie': race and empire in revisiting the Anzac legend' in Santanu Das, ed., *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge, 2011), pp.213-230

Tropical Force, who adopted the demeanour of colonial administrators in Papua and when visiting Colombo or the African ports of Cape Town or Durban. This is both underlined by, and in stark contrast to, the men of the Indian Army serving on the Gallipoli Peninsula who were seen as martial and manly and, despite the language barrier, were admired greatly as 'the finest type of coloured men [sic] that it was possible to meet.'⁴

A survey of the literature focussing on indigenous participation in the Australian military to date demonstrates a concentration on their role in the Second World War, with very little written about the men who volunteered and served in the First World War. Examples of this include *The Black Diggers* by Robert Hall, *Aborigines in the Defence of Australia* edited by Desmond Ball, *Forgotten Heroes; Aborigines at war from the Somme to Vietnam* by Alick Jackomos and Derek Fowell and *Forever Warriors* by Jan James.⁵ The latter providing a brief biographical account of Aborigines from Western Australia who have served in the military.

Noah Riseman's name can also be added to this group of historians, having written extensively on Aborigines in the Australian Army, but again, usually concentrating on their experiences during the Second World War and in Vietnam. In his article 'Serving Their Country: A Short History of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service in the Australian Army' published in the *Australian Army Journal*, he does provide an overview of the enlistment of Aborigines in the defence of Australia commencing with the Boer War.⁶

Robert Hall's *Black Diggers*, written whilst a serving army major associated with the Australian Defence Force Academy, provides a damning indictment of the senior military, as well as the Australian War Memorial.⁷ As pointed out by John Mulvaney in his review of Hall's monograph, more could have been said about Aborigines in the

⁴ P. Stanley, 'He was black, he was a White man, and a dinkum Aussie' p220

⁵ R. Hall, *The Black Diggers: Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Second World War* (Sydney, 1989); D. Ball, (ed) *Aborigines in the defence of Australia* (Sydney, 1991); A. Jackomos and D. Fowell, *Forgotten Heroes; Aborigines at war From the Somme to Vietnam* (Melbourne, 1993); J. James, *Forever Warriors* (Perth, 2011)

⁶ N. Riseman, 'Serving Their Country: A Short History of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service in the Australian Army', *Australian Army Journal*, Culture Edition 2013, Volume X, No. 3, pp.11-22

⁷ R. Hall, *The Black Diggers: Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Second World War* (Sydney, 1989)

First World War along with several other areas.⁸ Hall unfortunately accepts at face value most, if not all of the army sources which has probably led him to be less than critical of some, and to overlook areas that Mulvaney felt needed further investigation.

A number of articles concerning indigenous service in the First World War have appeared in different journals from time to time over the last twenty years, but so far there are only a very small number of books that have been written exclusively about indigenous First World War soldiers. One, the work of Dr Doreen Kartinyeri, deals with the indigenous soldiers from Raukkan (Point McLeay Mission) South Australia. Philippa Scarlet has published a list of as many of the indigenous soldiers as she has been able to track down so far as part of her account *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteers for the AIF*.⁹ Neither of these works has delved deeply into the topic, both authors prioritising recording details such as the names of these men, where they came from, and their service record.

Reveille, the official newsletter of the New South Wales RSL, included a short article in August 1931 in the first serious effort to elicit any information about Aboriginal servicemen.¹⁰ Several follow up articles, including one written by Douglas Grant, 'A Broken Pledge', appeared over the next few issues.¹¹ After the mid-1930s the topic languished until 1973 when Lieutenant Chris Coulthard Clark, then serving with the Australian Intelligence Corps, published an article in the *Army Journal*.¹² Clark relied heavily on the information that was current for the time and used only three sources: 1930s articles from *Reveille*; Harry Gordon's book *The Embarrassing Australian*; and a file from the Australian War Memorial that contained a roll of men from the Eastern States based on the *Reveille* articles. Clark highlighted the fact that Aborigines served in times of war since the 1890s, when colonial contingents were sent to South Africa during the Boer War. He also acknowledged that there may have been some prejudice or antagonism between Aborigines and settler Australians, which he felt 'depended on the prominence of the [A]boriginal soldier's racial features', and argues that 'those of only partial extraction, being virtually indistinguishable from their white comrades-in-

⁸ J. Mulvaney, 'Black Diggers' by R. A. Hall in *Aboriginal History* 1990, Volume 14, No. 2 pp.226-8

⁹ D. Kartinyeri, *Ngarrindjeri Anzacs* (Adelaide, 1996)

¹⁰ *Reveille* 31 August, 1931, p.5

¹¹ *Reveille* 31 July, 1929, p.22

¹² Lieutenant C. D. Clark, 'Aborigines in the First AIF', *Army Journal*, No. 286, March 1973, pp.21-26

arms, had few problems.’¹³ For some historians like David Huggonson, Clark’s article is seen as pioneering work which opened up the topic for further research and discussion.

In the 1980s Australia saw the beginning of a renewed focus on its indigenous peoples and a renewed interest in Aborigines who served in the First World War: among the historians to focus on the topic were Queenslander Rod Pratt who wrote a series of articles for *Sabretache*, the journal of The Military Historical Society of Australia; and David Huggonson who wrote a number of short articles for journals including *The Australian Quarterly* and the *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*. Pratt’s work concentrated on Queensland Aborigines who volunteered for the first Australian Imperial Force. In his first article Pratt provided some background to the involvement of Aborigines in the military prior to 1914, including the Queensland Defence Force which enlisted Aboriginal volunteers. In his second, he demonstrated how some managed to be accepted, while others were not, such as a group of men from Barambah.¹⁴ Some men, particularly those in Queensland who seemed to have been able to remain outside of the authority of the 1897 Act which controlled nearly every facet of many Aboriginal people’s lives, were able to enlist more easily: a number of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander volunteers ended up in mounted units. In a third article, Pratt explored the pre-war occupations of these men and why they became valued members of the Light Horse. His fourth follow-up piece examined the experiences of some of these men on their return to Australia. While they might have experienced some equality in the firing line, upon return to Australia Pratt found that many indigenous soldiers were subjected to the same inequities that they had experienced pre-enlistment.

In 1989 David Huggonson, Branch Manager Central Southern Area of the Aboriginal Development Commission, wrote the first of a number of usually short articles highlighting some aspect of the service of Aborigines during the First World War. Writing for *The Australian Quarterly* Huggonson took a similar line to Pratt, highlighting the anomalies that these men experienced when trying to volunteer. Huggonson believed that some volunteered to prove that they were equal to their

¹³ Lieutenant C. D. Clark, ‘Aborigines in the First AIF, p.22

¹⁴ D. Huggonson, ‘The dark diggers of the AIF’, *The Australian Quarterly*, Spring 1989, p.353 - a group of 10 Aboriginal men from Barambah Aboriginal Reserve were discharged on 13 June 1917 as having been irregularly enlisted. A further 24 were accepted and allotted to the 11th Light Horse

settler Australian counterparts and expected that their war-service would formalise this equality, granting them full citizenship and social security benefits.

Using a transnational approach is Tim Winegard's *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War*, a pioneering comparative history, providing the first comprehensive examination and comparison of how indigenous peoples of Canada, Australia, Newfoundland, New Zealand and South Africa fared during the First World War. Winegard has shown that while the dominions (with the exception of New Zealand) actively discouraged indigenous participation at the outbreak of the First World War, by late in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign the Imperial government was demanding their inclusion to meet the pragmatic need for military manpower. While indigenous Australians were not slow to respond in the hope of proving themselves equal, the government was slow to change their attitude towards their inclusion. Winegard has argued that the response from these Dominion governments towards the desire of indigenes to serve the Crown was ungenerous and uncreative, requiring a request from the British government in October 1915 to instigate a change in Dominion policy. Such a change was slower still coming in Australia, but may explain a later softening in attitude by some recruiting officers.

Some of the figures quoted by Winegard for enlistments, casualty rates (whether killed or wounded) are now out of date as further research into this field continues: at the time of going to press, the only figure for Tasmania to be included was the number of known enlistments.¹⁵

It is hoped that through *Serving our Country*, a new and far-reaching project under the leadership of Professor Michael Dodson, Australian National University, that we will not only learn about 'how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples saw their participation in the armed forces and in defence support, but how it impacted on them, their families and communities and their relationship to the nation using a range of media.' While the aim of the project is to record their stories and to increase public awareness and recognition of Indigenous Australian's service, but hopefully will establish once and for all the number of men of Indigenous heritage that served.¹⁶

¹⁵ The figure of 65 was provided by me to Tim Winegard early in my research and this number has since been updated, but not before the manuscript went to press. T. C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples and the First World War* (Cambridge, 2012), p.231

¹⁶ ncis.anu.edu.au/_lib/doc/soc/SoC-Participant-Information-Sheet.pdf (accessed 26 July 2014)

A highlighted by Timothy Winegard, Australian Aborigines were not the only non-white colonial troops deployed on the battlefields of Europe fighting with or in support of the Allies. A visit to any number of Commonwealth War Cemeteries that dot northern France and Belgium soon demonstrates that men who were not of European heritage and would have been considered non-whites were also part of the bigger story of the First World War. At the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914, Great Britain and France controlled the two largest colonial empires. Both countries would draw on their colonies extensively for human and material resources. Britain was able to draw upon over two million men from its Dominions scattered around the world. Nearly half of this number were drawn from India which provided 1.4 million volunteers, of which around one million would serve overseas.¹⁷ As noted by historian Hew Strachan 'war for Europe meant war for the world', white and non-white alike – all called to feed the war machines of the Western Front, Russia, the Middle East, West Africa, Gallipoli Peninsula, Salonika, Mesopotamia and elsewhere.¹⁸ While the Australia's indigenous soldiers played but a small role in the larger scheme of things, those who made it past the recruiting officers, District Commandants looking to weed out those considered not civilized enough and got to the front line, in the words of Rudyard Kipling 'did not shame his [their] kind' and deserve to be commemorated equally with their settler counterparts.¹⁹

¹⁷ H. Flynn, *The Great War: 10 Contested Questions* (Sydney, 2015), p.179

¹⁸ H. Strachan, *The First World War* (New York, 2004), p.69

¹⁹ 'My Boy Jack' by Rudyard Kipling written in 1916 and published in D. Crane, *Empires of the Dead: How one man's vision led to the creation of WW1's War Graves* (London, 2013), p.180



Figure 1: Map of Tasmania, reproduced with the kind permission of the Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania. [Cape Barren Island is part of the Furneaux Group of Islands and is located immediately below Flinders Island.]

Chapter 2

A dying race?

The old Race and the New
Last of her tribe! left sorrowful and lonely
A vanished race to wail;
Of wars and woes which wrought decay, she only
Is left to tell the tale –
To tell of those who common ills defied,
Yet drooped before the white man's breath and died.

Last of her tribe! her lot, indeed, were dreary,
If charity were dead.
If will to aid, and love to cheer the weary,
from ev'ry heart had fled.
But, see! She is not left without a friend –
Without the solace sympathy can lend.¹

Mid-afternoon on 8 May 1876 lying in front of a fire, Truganini the last Tasmanian 'full blood' Aborigine living in the state passed away at Hobart. Her passing brought global attention to Tasmania as her race was considered now officially to be extinct.² Unbeknown to many though, still living on Kangaroo Island off the coast of South Australia, were two other women reputedly full blood Tasmanian Aboriginal women – Suke and Sal who were both still alive in May 1876.

This chapter argues that despite colonial discourse around Tasmanian Aboriginal people being a 'dying race' there was in fact a vibrant early twentieth century population from which at least 74 men volunteered to serve in World War one. In this

¹ 'The Old Race and the New' in B. C. Mollison and Coral Everitt, *A Chronology of Events Affecting Tasmanian Aboriginal People Since Contact by Whites (1772-1976)* (Hobart, 1976)

² See R. Taylor *Unearthed*, p.36. Sal was supposed to be a sister to Truganini while Suke was identified as being from Cape Portland. Sal reportedly died in 1893 and Suke in 1894 – p.141. Both women outliving Truganini by about eighteen years and passing unacknowledged as Tasmanian Aboriginal women; L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history since 1803*, (Crow's Nest, 2012) p.269

chapter I will explore the extent to which Tasmanian Aboriginal people and settler Tasmanians viewed the issue of indigenous identity beginning around the time of the demise of Truganini and moving into the 20th Century. The exploration of this is important to the telling of the whole story of why a group of men, particularly those from Furneaux Islands enlisted in the first Australia Imperial Force in 1914. This was at a time when their Aboriginality was effectively being denied by the Tasmanian government on the one hand, while at the same time two pieces of legislation had been passed that 'did at least acknowledge the existence of Tasmanian 'half-castes' although not on the Tasmanian mainland.'³ How might Marcus Brown, a 'half-caste' islander have identified himself? Or John William Miller, a grandson of Fanny Cochrane Smith and a relative of the islanders who was at the time of his enlistment living in Hobart and a member of the Derwent Regiment?

With the 19th century global attention focussed on Tasmania with the passing of Truganini, commentators of the day, according to Russell McGregor 'were well aware that people of mixed Tasmanian and other descent still lived on the Bass Strait islands. The assertion that the Tasmanian race had become extinct, in no way indicated ignorance, or an attempted concealment on the part of many, of the existence of these people. Rather, it followed logically from the contemporary conception of a race as a discrete and bounded entity.'⁴ This is supported by contemporary government documents and newspapers which often referred to people of mixed Tasmanian and other descent as 'half-castes', 'quarter-castes' or similar, denying them their heritage and any acknowledgement of their Aboriginal ancestry. Under current legislation, all people of Aboriginal descent in Tasmania, who identify as Aboriginal and who are accepted by their communities as such are considered to be Tasmanian Aboriginal people. But this acceptance has been a long and at times bitter struggle.

The whole question of a person's race or identity is more complex than a simple statement compiled by bureaucrats or judges. We might well ask how young Marcus Brown saw himself in 1914. Did he regard himself as Aboriginal within the confines of his family or local community? Or did he see himself as a Straitsman or Cape Barren Islander? While we will never know his view, it is more than likely that he simply saw himself as a young twenty-year-old labourer who had been offered the

³ J. Chesterman & B. Galligan, *Citizens Without Rights*, p.150

⁴ R. McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880-1939* (Melbourne 1998), p.50

opportunity of a trip to the other side of the world. What about John Miller, who spent most of his life in Hobart? Did he see himself as any different from the other men in the Derwent Regiment on account of the fact that his maternal grandmother was Fanny Cochrane Smith, a woman well known by many people, and acknowledged by the Tasmanian Government as an Aboriginal woman? If he had felt that it was appropriate then he might have shared some of the experiences he had as a child, learning the ways of the bush and of his ancestors from his grandmother who was keen that her children and grandchildren should know about their culture to pass onto the next generation. Yet it is more than likely, that he kept his Aboriginality well hidden, given societal views at the time and the contemporaneous army regulations. The same would probably be true of young Jack Hearps as he tried to make his way in the world. To openly state that you were Aboriginal was not only socially unacceptable and likely to cause problems, but at odds with what many Tasmanians believed at the time – as it was widely regarded that there were no Aborigines left in Tasmania, therefore it was not possible for a person to claim to be Aboriginal, regardless of their genealogy.

Having dispossessed Tasmania's Aborigines of their lands and forced the remnants to the margins of society, they were then denigrated through being referred to as the problem 'half-castes'. Prior to his death on 3 April 1882, Hugh Munro Hull, a former Clerk of the House of Assembly, wrote a detailed article concerning the demise of the Tasmanian Aborigines, which was published posthumously a week later. In his article, Hull claimed that Fanny Cochrane Smith was 'now, the real, live, last of the Aborigines of Tasmania.'⁵ A few weeks later a correspondent writing under the name of 'Your Own' stated, based on well 'avouched for' facts, that Hull was mistaken, and that she was in fact a 'half-caste'.⁶ This may have been a prelude to a motion being put before State Parliament.

On 7 September a motion was put to the members of the house for an increase in the pension that she had been receiving since 1851. William Burgess, the member for West Hobart, moved that her pension be increased to £50 per year based on the grounds that her husband was no longer able to work, and that she could not support herself.⁷ While most parliamentarians supported the motion, there was some

⁵*The Mercury* 11 April 1882 Supplement pp.1-2

⁶ *The Mercury* 23 June 1882, p.3

⁷ *The Mercury* 8 September 1882, p.3

dissension, with James Dooley claiming that he knew of a man with a wife and nine children still living who also had a similar claim. John Lyne informed the members that he had had a woman in his service and she had told him that her father was a 'Scotch boatman', and that there were some 50 'half-castes' in the [Bass] Straits who also desired a pension. Adye Douglas also spoke against it, on the grounds that Fanny would be better off than most white women who were unable to gain a pension of any kind. The motion was eventually passed, but not without further lively discussion in the local newspapers, including one correcting Mr Lyne's claim.⁸ A further resolution was passed in 1884 granting Fanny Cochrane Smith 200 acres of land in addition to the one hundred acres that she already held.⁹ Clearly there was a lot of misinformation abroad, but, in keeping with the times, the questions about who was the last Aboriginal Tasmanian and whether one still existed, remained current.

By 1875 at least, James Erskine Calder and others of a similar mindset not only looked forward to the 'decline' but more likely to the extinction of the Bass Strait community, in order to remove the 'stigma of the disastrous conflict between black and white'.¹⁰ Calder was not a lone voice but just one of many biologists, ethnographers and social commentators, both in Europe and America, writing about the threat to racial unity and purity by the 'half-caste' who 'compromised the purity of blood'.¹¹ In the United States racial intermarriage was strictly forbidden by statute in many states, and deterred by public opinion elsewhere. According to Henry Reynolds 'half castes' were seen as 'subversive – they were biologically dangerous and therefore a threat to vital national interests.'¹² While it was possible for a person to change political allegiances, or to recant or convert to a different religion, nothing could be done about a person's apparently tainted blood. Even in 1928 people described in the terminology of the time as 'half-castes' were seen as a 'pathetic, sinister third race' and that if they were 'not taken in hand they were likely to become one of the most dangerous elements in the whole community.'¹³ Daisy Bates, a woman who spent a lot of time studying

⁸ *The Mercury* 14 September 1882 p.2; *Launceston Examiner* 6 November 1882 p.3

⁹ J. Barnard, 'Notes on the Last Living Aboriginal of Tasmania' *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania* 1889 pp.60-64

¹⁰ B. Mollison and C. Everitt, *A Chronology of Events Affecting Tasmanian Aboriginal People Since Contact with Whites (1772-1976)* entry for 1875

¹¹ H. Reynolds, *Nowhere People* (Camberwell, 2005) p.5

¹² H. Reynolds, *Nowhere People*, p.5

¹³ H. Reynolds, *Nowhere People*, p.8

Aboriginal people as an amateur ethnographer, espoused the view that the 'only good half caste is a dead one.'¹⁴

Brough-Smyth in his observations of the 'half-castes' in Victoria published in 1876, noted that many Aborigines 'in their form, features and colour' had more of the character of their European fathers than their indigenous mothers. 'They had some facial characteristics that were obviously Aboriginal, but seldom was any one feature very strongly or coarsely marked. They were very like the people of southern Europe' while others would have passed as English children.¹⁵ Similar observations were later made by J. H. Bell.¹⁶ While the 'full bloods' were now living on borrowed time, the 'half-castes' were a different matter and it was becoming increasingly apparent that the 'mixed-blood' population was not declining, nor was it going to disappear. In fact the numbers were increasing, with a number of families of large numbers of children being reported. As a result, they presented White Australia with what was seen at the time as a social, political, moral and intellectual problem. In 1917, the military authorities in Australia felt the need to create a separate regulation to cover the enlistment of 'half-castes', was an indicator of this situation.

By the early twentieth century it became obvious to different levels of government in Australia that while the so-called 'full blood' Aborigines were dying out, the 'half-caste' population was a different matter altogether; their numbers were in fact increasing. Observers were alarmed at the rise in this population, which tended to be youthful and made up of large families despite the poverty and deprivation many faced. But Australia, at the time of Federation, was obsessed with blood and biology, and was committed head and heart to a White Australia. Therefore a growing number of 'half-castes' was worrying and, in an effort to control the 'problem' if for no other reason, policies were implemented that saw increasing numbers of men, women and children removed from their families and placed in closed and isolated reserves, cutting the very important web of kinship. All this was done in the name of a White Australia and to maintain a mythological racial purity!

Sexual relations between European men and Aboriginal women began soon after first contact and continued for many years, whether as a result of a mutually agreed

¹⁴ H. Reynolds, *Nowhere People*, p.8

¹⁵ R. Taylor, *Unearthed* p.109

¹⁶ J. H. Bell, 'Some demographic and cultural characteristics of the La Perouse Aborigines' *Mankind*, Volume 5, No. 10, 1962 quoted in L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, p.292

exchange, abduction and rape, or a semi-permanent relationship, as was the case of the sealers of the Bass Strait islands. It was not until later in the nineteenth century when the second and third generations were observed that interest in this and other groups intensified, particularly among ethnographers and anthropologists. International interest in the Straitsmen eventually led to the arrival of anthropologist Norman Tindale at Cape Barren Island in 1939 to reconstruct the growth of the resident population and their hybridization through a process of measuring and analysing the Islanders' physical and mental characteristics which he later wrote up and published in a report titled '*Growth of a people; formation and development of a hybrid aboriginal and white stock on the islands of Bass Strait, Tasmania – 1815-1949*'.¹⁷

Fanny, 'Dolly' and Betty:

While Tindale chose to conduct his scientific experiments among the Aboriginal population on Cape Barren Island, two other family groupings existed on mainland Tasmania unbeknownst to their Bass Strait island relatives, according to an article written by Vicki Matson-Green.¹⁸ One was a north-west coast family group who could trace their line of descent from Dalrymple Johnson, with the other belonging to Fanny Cochrane Smith, whose descendants could and can still be found in the Channel district south of Hobart. The men who form the largest part of this study are drawn from these three groupings along with another group from Kangaroo Island and another one or two ungrouped individuals.

Fanny Cochrane Smith had a connection to the Furneaux Group having been born at Wybalenna in 1834/5 and later moving to Hobart, remaining in the south of the state where she raised her large family. Many of Dalrymple Johnson's family were removed to Wybalenna as part of the removal of the colony's Aborigines, including her mother Woretermoteryenna and grandfather Mannalargenna, a man considered to have been a warrior chief and leader of his tribe. While she herself did not experience life there

¹⁷ Unfortunately Tindale was not sympathetic to the Straitsmen's morals by failing to treat the elders with respect and forcing the teenage girls and boys to undress in front of each other in preparation for his examination. This was a humiliating experience and one that Molly Mallet recalled later in her own memoirs. M. Mallet *My Past – Their Future: Stories from Cape Barren Island* (Sandy Bay, 2001) pp.43-45

¹⁸ V. Matson-Green, 'Tasmania 2; 'You Cannot deny me and mine any longer' in A. McGrath (ed) *Contested Ground: Australian Aborigines under the British Crown*, (St. Leonards, 1995), pp.352-353

firsthand, she no doubt learned about it from her mother when she came to live out her remaining years in the home of her daughter between 1841 and 1847.

During the late 19th century, the children and grandchildren of the original sealers and their Aboriginal 'wives' were forced to move as white settlers moved onto the islands of the Furneaux Group, taking over the leases that had once provided them with a good living from mutton birding and sealing. Most would move to the western end of Cape Barren Island where the state government offered them leaseholds of between two and ten hectares for homestead and agricultural pursuits out of some recognition that they were a separate community with special needs and needed to be protected. In 1872 there were seven Islander families, according to Ryan, consisting of some 32 adults and 52 children. Among these were George Everett, William Brown, Richard Maynard and Edward Mansell.¹⁹ It is from these men and their island 'wives' that the Furneaux Island group of veterans comes from.

By far the largest group that has retained its Tasmanian Aboriginal identity is the Islander community that began to form in the late 1830s on the eastern islands of Bass Strait. Before these families were forced onto Cape Barren Island and the loss of their leases they lived on the various islands that formed the Furneaux Group. Among the four families on Gun Carriage Island was Watanimarina, another daughter of Mannalergenna and her sealer husband Thomas Beeton and their family.²⁰ On nearby Woody Island was Wottecawiddy, a sister of Woretermoeteyenna and her sealer husband James Everett and their four children. Also on Woody Island was Pollerwottelsterkunne from Piper River, who was living with Richard Maynard and their three children. Long Island was home to 'Black Judy, her husband Edward Mansell, and family.²¹ While Tin Kettle Island was home to Pleenperrenner from Cape Portland, John Smith and their children, on Cape Barren Island lived another of Mannalergenna's daughters – Nimerana, with John Thomas and at least three of their children.²² There were others living on the Bass Strait islands but not all remained on the islands or had sons that volunteered for enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force. Others (white men) would enter this tight knit community, namely William Richard Brown, John

¹⁹ L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, pp.281-2

²⁰ L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, p.275

²¹ B. Mollison and C. Everitt claim that her Aboriginal name was Pollerrelberner, but Lyndall Ryan does not support this assertion

²² L. Ryan *Tasmanian Aborigines*, pp.275-6; Mollison and Everitt claim that Nimerana and Pollerrelberner may be one in the same person

Summers, and George Burgess. Among the descendants of these women, 28 men enlisted in the first Australian Imperial Force - fifteen men from Cape Barren Island and thirteen from nearby Flinders Island.

Fanny Cochrane Smith was born to Tarenootairrer, originally from Cape Portland, at the Wybalenna Aboriginal Establishment in around 1834/35.²³ At the age of seven, Fanny was sent to the Queen's Orphan Schools at New Town. Here, desperately homesick, she was returned to her mother at Wybalenna, and from there entered into domestic service in the home of the Catechist. This was not a happy arrangement. Fanny rebelled, and was finally permitted to return to her family who were living at Oyster Cove, she was now aged around thirteen. But this did not last either, and she returned to domestic service in Hobart until the death of her step-father Nicermenic in 1851, when Fanny once more returned to Oyster Cove to live with her sister Mary Ann and widowed mother.

In 1854 Fanny married William Smith, a sawyer (timber cutter) and former convict. Her first child William was born in 1858. He was followed by five sisters and five brothers. Among Fanny's numerous grandchildren were eight men who enlisted to form the southern or Channel sub-group, including John William Miller, who was the son of Sarah Bernice Laurel and was the first among this group to be killed in action within hours of landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Like the descendants of Dalrymple Johnson, they too form part of today's Tasmanian Aboriginal Communities.

During her lifetime Fanny Cochrane Smith was determined that her children and grandchildren should learn the ways of the ancestors. She was supported in this by Truganini and other women who visited her at her home at Nicholls Rivulet. Several of Fanny's children were interviewed later by Ernest Westlake on a visit to the state in 1910 and spoke of the visits by Truganini and of being taught bushcraft and the ways of the Aborigines by her. Towards the end of her life, Fanny recorded a number of Tasmanian Aboriginal songs on to wax cylinders so that they would be preserved for posterity: she also worked tirelessly for the community in which she lived at Nichols Rivulet, whether black or white. While Fanny was able to straddle both worlds and be

²³ Lyndall Ryan states 1835. The spelling of her mother's name is that used by Ryan in *Tasmanian Aborigines* in her biography of Fanny Cochrane Smith. Other spellings used are Tingnootererre and Tanganuturra as well as Ploorernelle. According to Mollison and Everitt - the father of Fanny was John William Smith a sealer and coxswain who lived on Gun Carriage Island and later on Tin Kettle Island. The spellings of the Aboriginal names are those that have used by Lyndall Ryan.

accepted in either, the same may not have extended to her children who did not enjoy the same notoriety as their mother. Did they feel the need to hide the Aboriginal heritage or was it simply not an issue among the Channel community who were accepting of the family.

Dalrymple Johnson was the oldest surviving daughter of Woretermoteryenna and her sealer 'husband' George Briggs who lived on Clarke Island.²⁴ Woretermoteryenna was a daughter of Mannalargenna, a chief of the Ben Lomond Tribe. Two other daughters born to George Briggs and Woretermoteryenna survived into their early 20s and a third died young after a tribesman was supposed to have thrown her into a fire, according to Bill Mollison. John, the youngest child and only boy, eventually married and moved to Victoria with his family.²⁵ Dalrymple had an interesting life beginning with her time in the household of Dr Mountgarret. It is thought that she married more than once and gave birth to thirteen children.²⁶ She eventually settled at Latrobe with her husband Thomas Johnson (an ex-convict) and their large family where they became respectable and wealthy citizens, despite the many obstacles along the way. Woretermoteryenna left Flinders Island around 1841 at her daughter's request, and was living with the family at the time of her death in October 1847.²⁷

The move to 'Frogmore' at Latrobe proved to be a profitable one for Thomas and Dalrymple Johnson, who soon began acquiring land at Ballahoo, Tarleton and at Sherwood. While Thomas Johnson had initially made money from his timber splitting activities, it was coal that ultimately provided more business opportunities as new collieries created a demand for service. In about 1856, according to one biographer, Thomas Johnson built a community hall at Ballahoo which was later used as a school room and for religious services.²⁸ The biggest sub-group within this study are the descendants of Dalrymple Johnson who number around 34, all originating from the North-west coast of Tasmania – namely Jane married to John Hearps, Thomas married

²⁴ L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, p.61. No image of Dalrymple Johnson has been located to date

²⁵ There is evidence to suggest that two boys were born to Woretermoteryenna and George Briggs and that one of these boys was taken to Hobart Town by Munro and Mansell. Mollison and Everitt, *The Tasmanian Aborigines and Their Descendants Part 2 – Briggs Genealogy*, note 27. More work is still needed to establish whether any of John's descendants served in the First World War.

²⁶ Diana Wyllie, *Dolly Dalrymple* (Latrobe, 2004)

²⁷ Kibben/Gunn Database of Tasmanian births, deaths & marriages – Margaret Briggs died in the Longford district on 22 October 1847 from natural causes, the informant being Dr Peyton Jones, Coroner. Margaret is described as an Aborigine

²⁸ Diana Wyllie, *Dolly Dalrymple*, p.59

to Elizabeth Atkinson, Charlotte married to James Henry Gower, her brother Alfred married to Amelia Wells and William married to Frances Ellmore.²⁹

The Bass Strait sealing industry began in 1798 when Captain Charles Bishop and his crew obtained 9,000 skins at Kent Bay on Cape Barren Island. The number of seal taken over the next eight years all but decimated the industry, forcing the big Sydney and American based companies to move on to new grounds in New Zealand. This opened up the Bass Strait islands to exploitation by smaller companies from Hobart and Launceston, who were forced at times to put into the north coast of Van Diemen's Land for repairs and sustenance. This brought the sealers into contact with Aborigines from the North West and North East nations on their summer pilgrimage to the coast for mutton-birds, seals, shellfish and other seabirds and their eggs. As contact intensified some Aborigines were willing to trade with the sealers. This started with kangaroo skins, but later included women, who were exchanged for dogs or traded to another sealer when no longer needed. Not all would be traded, with many women kidnapped by other clans or by the sealers themselves to help catch and skin the seals.

Another often overlooked family grouping which also had its origins in Tasmania is that belonging to Betty, a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman who was taken to Kangaroo Island where she later married Nathaniel Thomas and raised a family. Among her closest friends were two other women who had come from Tasmania and been forcibly removed to Kangaroo Island, where they eked out the rest of their lives.³⁰ Four of Betty's grandsons would later enlist for service in World War one. The experiences of Stamford (alias Tiger), that he shared with other islanders provides one of the few glimpses we have of how these men were treated. But Tiger's stories need to be treated with some scepticism as they were usually told when he was under the influence of alcohol or in a rage.

George Augustus Robinson, appointed in 1829 to conciliate with the Aboriginal Tasmanians, travelled to the Bass Strait islands in 1830 with the intention of removing the women who were co-habiting with the sealers. While there, he recorded the names of fourteen women who were living on Kangaroo Island. While not on the list of names recorded by Robinson, but living there nonetheless, were Betty,

²⁹ Johnson/Hearps RGD #1492/1843 TAHO 37/4; Johnson/Atkinson – D.Wyllie, *Dolly Dalrymple*, p.63; Johnson/Gower RDG #645/1863 TAHO 37/22; Johnson/Wells RGD #573/1872 TAHO 37/31 and Johnson/Ellmore (Elmer) RGD #542/1867 TAHO 37/26

³⁰ Her story is told in R. Taylor, *Unearthed: the Aboriginal Tasmanians of Kangaroo Island* along with that of her descendants

Makekerledede (Sal) and Suke, three Tasmanian Aboriginal women who had been taken there as young women to help the sealers.³¹ At one time, according to Rebe Taylor, there were around twenty-two Tasmanian Aboriginal women living on the island: there may have been more.³² Betty eventually married Nat Thomas and had a family.³³ Maggerleede was reported to be one of Truganini's sisters from Bruny Island and Suke who does not seem to have had an Aboriginal name, but was possibly from Cape Portland.³⁴ Betty died in 1878, two years after Truganini, a woman who in her own times was constructed as having been 'the last of her race'. Maggerleede and Suke were both still very much alive then, living a hand to mouth existence on the island and working on one of the properties in exchange for food. Just when these two women died is a matter of some debate according to Rebe Taylor, but certainly they lived at least another ten or so years after Truganini. Neither woman had any children.

Betty gave birth to three children, fathered by Nat Thomas – Mary the first child to be born on Kangaroo Island and who later married William Seymour and Hannah who married Thomas Simpson and Samuel who appears to have gone to sea as a teenager and not returned. Hannah was the mother of Stamford, alias 'Tiger' Simpson and grandmother to Norman, Stephen and Alfred Waller who all served.³⁵

A proud people still:

The Census conducted on 2-3 April 1911 was the first in which all six states and two territories participated as separate entities and the last to be taken before war was declared in August 1914.³⁶ It is probably one of the most important sets of data about Australia and its population, as Britain and her dominions edged towards war in Europe. Through its use of categories it also demonstrates and reflects societal attitudes towards Australian Aborigines, which were in turn reflected under the existing laws. Section 127 of the Commonwealth Constitution ensured that the cards relating to 'full blooded' Aborigines were eliminated from the tabulation process, while 'half-castes' were to be included. It was the opinion of the Commonwealth Attorney General that 'persons of the half-blood are not 'aboriginal natives' for the

³¹ Rebe Taylor uses the spelling Makekerledede aka Sal

³² R. Taylor, *Unearthed*, p.36

³³ R. Taylor, *Unearthed*, p.98

³⁴ R. Taylor, *Unearthed*, p.36

³⁵ R. Taylor, *Unearthed*, p.199

³⁶ In 1901 the ACT had been incorporated into New South Wales and the Northern Territory was part of South Australia; G. H. Knibbs, *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia* Volume I Statistician's Report, Chapter IV p.98

purposes of the Constitution and ... persons of less than half-aboriginal blood are not aboriginal natives.’³⁷ Yet ‘Full blood and ‘half-castes’ from over thirty different countries were included: but not Australia’s indigenous inhabitants.

The last state census taken prior to the outbreak of the First World War was for the period 1913 to 1914. It included the number of ‘half-caste’ Aboriginal men and women. Officially, the total ‘half-caste’ Tasmanian population was stated to be 227, (123 males, 104 females).³⁸ How these figures were derived is unclear: it is possible to make two observations about them. Firstly, that the same figures were published by the Commonwealth of Australia in the 1911 Census Data and may have simply been used by the Tasmanian government.³⁹ Secondly that most if not all lived on the Furneaux Islands based on the information provided to the Tasmanian government by Captain James Bladon, schoolmaster on Cape Barren Island, and the same figure also derived by the work of historian Heather Felton.⁴⁰ Whether any of the children of Fanny Cochrane Smith living in the Channel district in the south of the state, or those of Dalrymple Johnson in the north, were included is unlikely given the low overall number and the opinion on Aboriginality by the Commonwealth Attorney General. It would seem more than likely that they, along with the descendants of Dalrymple Johnson, were included as settler Australians.

By using several publicly available genealogies including those compiled by Captain James Bladon and the work of Bill Mollison and Coral Everitt to compile a tally, it is evident that the numbers published in the Statistics of Tasmania were an under-representation of the number of Tasmanians of Aboriginal descent living in the state.⁴¹ I estimate that the number was around 540, taking into account as many of the descendants of Dalrymple Johnson and Fanny Cochrane Smith as could be located as being alive in 1911. As suggested earlier that others such as John Briggs had moved to the mainland there may well have been more. If these numbers are correct, then, far from being an extinct race, Tasmanian Aborigines were very much a part of the local

³⁷ G. H. Knibbs, *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia* Volume I Statistician’s Report, p.51

³⁸ Statistics of Tasmania 1913-1914.

³⁹ Knibbs, G. H. *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Volume 1, Statistician’s Report (Melbourne, 1917), Chapter XVII p.222

⁴⁰ Captain James Bladon informed the Tasmanian government in September 1911 that ‘by dint of careful investigation’ he had now estimated that about 160 persons of all ages were resident on the reserve on Cape Barren Island. University of Tasmania Archives RS 40/1; Heather Felton, *Living with the Land, Book Six: Continuity and Change* (Hobart, 1991), p.47

⁴¹ B. Mollison and C Everitt, *The Tasmanian Aborigines and their Descendants (Chronology, Genealogies and Social Data)* and public genealogies published on Ancestry.com.au

community at the outbreak of the First World War: as can be seen by the image of the Cape Barren Islanders (p37) also taken in 1911 on the visit of the Governor and his wife. The number or percentage of people who saw themselves as or who identified as Aboriginal is unknown, except maybe for those who lived on Cape Barren Island and their relatives on nearby Flinders Island, who were regularly referred to by government as 'half-castes,' the descendants of Tasmania's first people. This could, in part, explain the difference between the official figure and that taken from the published genealogies.

The number of people who identify themselves as Aboriginal has increased dramatically since the mid-1990s, which may be in part due to changes in the Commonwealth Government policy. While Tasmanian Aborigines are of mixed heritage, many identify as being Aboriginal people, which forms an important element of who they are as a person, and how they connect to country.

In present day Australia the working legal definition of Aboriginality states that 'an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.' This definition is now enshrined in Commonwealth legislation and has been accepted by the High Court of Australia 'as the interpretation of the expression 'Aboriginal race' in the constitution.'⁴² This however has been critiqued by some Aboriginal people. For example, Vicki Matson-Green asserts that the Federal government's definition 'was developed and based on the values and ideas of the dominant society.'⁴³

Chief Justice French in his 2011 article for the *Australian Indigenous Law Review* was of the opinion that a comprehension of Aboriginal identity among the non-indigenous community is rather limited as a 'complete definition is elusive'. Further that:

It is possible to speak of different kinds of Aboriginal identity representing the diversity of Indigenous histories, lifestyles and relationships of Indigenous people with each other, and with non-Indigenous society. For some, these identities as Aboriginal people will be defined in part by their places of conception and birth, by kinship, by membership of one or more

⁴² M. Dodson, 'The Wentworth Lecture'. 'The end in the beginning; re(de)fining Aboriginality' *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, p.6

⁴³ V. Matson-Green 'Tasmania 2: 'You cannot deny me and mine any longer' in A. McGrath (ed) *Contested Ground: Australian Aborigines under the British Crown* (St. Leonards, 1995), p.343

Aboriginal societies, by the land and waters to which they belong, and their knowledge of the stories relating to them, and by their use of traditional language and skills.⁴⁴

When constructing the 1976 Northern Territories Aboriginal Land Rights Act, Justice John Toohey also dealt with the question of Aboriginality. He concluded that, 'membership of a race is something which is determined at birth and cannot, in a sense, be relinquished, nor can it be entered into by someone lacking the necessary racial origin', although he added that it was ... 'unwise to lay down rigid criteria in advance'.⁴⁵ It would appear that this issue would not disappear any time soon. Over the last two decades, several court cases and commissions have concerned themselves with Aboriginal identity to some extent, as part of a bigger issue such as land rights, as in the Mabo case, or the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. In the latter, Justice Jenkins held that while Aboriginal descent was 'essential', it was not always sufficient. 'Where Aboriginal descent is uncertain, or where the extent of Aboriginal descent might be regarded as insignificant, factors of self-recognition or recognition by persons who are accepted as being Aboriginals could have an evidentiary value'.⁴⁶

Vicki Matson-Green observed that 'the requirement of identity gives the power to determine who is and who isn't an Aborigine to the dominant class, the descendants of the invaders of this country'.⁴⁷ In Tasmania by August 2002, feelings ran high among some members of the Aboriginal community following the handing down of the report of the Independent Indigenous Advisory Committee, set up to hear any objections raised against those whose names appeared on the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania electors roll. Despite there being around 14,000 Tasmanians who had identified themselves as Aboriginal in the 1996 Census, in 2002 when ATSIC published the list of names of those members of the Aboriginal community who wished to be included in a provisional electors roll, only 1,298 appeared.⁴⁸ Objections against the inclusion of 1,158 names were heard by the Independent Indigenous Advisory Committee which met in August 2002: it resulted in 480 persons having their cases overturned and their names added to the rolls, leaving 678 people who were invited to make a submission in relation to the objection. Of the latter group, 444 applicants

⁴⁴ R. French, 'Aboriginal Identity', *Australian Indigenous Law Review*, Volume 15, No. 1, 2011 p.18

⁴⁵ R. French, 'Aboriginal Identity', p.19

⁴⁶ R. French, 'Aboriginal Identity', p.20

⁴⁷ V. Matson-Green 'Tasmania 2: 'You cannot deny me and mine any longer' p343

⁴⁸ L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, pp. 346-47

submitted further evidence, but the original objections were upheld, resulting in 130 applying to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a review of the advisory committee's decision. The tribunal's decision was handed down on 18 October, in time for the ATSIC Regional Council election in November. Among the findings of the tribunal was, that the relevance and credibility placed on oral histories and traditions were just as credible as archival material. In conclusion, that tribunal found that 'there was no requirement to find any actual line of descent nor to identify any full blood [*sic*] aborigines from whom the descent is traced.'⁴⁹ With the abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Council in later years, the issue of Aboriginal identity in relation to who was eligible to vote for a statutory body was now an issue for the states, but did not change the fact that most other issues relating to Aborigines remained the province of the Commonwealth of Australia.

At the time of federation there was no single definition of Aboriginality but it is generally accepted that the term Aboriginal referred to a person of 'pure' Aboriginal stock or 'full blood'. Since, as argued by Chesterman and Galligan, that this was a 'legislative and administrative category of white-settler regimes, it was manipulated for policy purposes and extended to include some part Aborigines or 'half-castes' who were identified as belonging with Aborigines.'⁵⁰ Today this definition has been broadened, is more comprehensive and inclusive. Yet it could be argued that being an Aboriginal person amounts to more than statements or definitions made by judges and politicians: it is essentially about how people see themselves. Rather than a question of identity as a construct imposed by others, maybe the question that should be asked is 'what is the substance of Aboriginality?' This very question was posed to Steve Stanton, former chairperson of the Tasmanian Land Council, who replied that 'Aboriginality is the feeling of belonging to the land, knowing that your ancestors were Aboriginal and that they walked that land.'⁵¹ Being Aboriginal is as much about a connection to place as it is to people. It is more than simply a question of ancestry, but a matter of belonging; a feeling within, not just skin colour or certain facial features.

⁴⁹ L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines: A history 1802* (Crow's Nest, 2012), p.348

⁵⁰ J. Chesterman and B. Galligan, *Citizens without Rights* (Cambridge, 1997) p.64

⁵¹ I. Skira, R. Cosgrove 'A Muttonbird in the Hand' *Natural History* Vol 104, Issue 8, 1995 (online version)

In 1992 several members of the Flinders Island and Cape Barren Islander communities were interviewed as part of a documentary about the meaning of being black, and the myth of the extinction of the Tasmanian Aborigines.⁵² The documentary makers hoped to give lie to the idea that Tasmanian Aborigines were an extinct race. Among those interviewed Aunty Ida West, and Vicki Matson-Green, representing the views of three different generations. Auntie Ida West, Aboriginal Elder, grew up on the Bass Strait islands, knowing that she was a Tasmanian Aborigine and that her heritage was important to her and to her sense of who she was. Vicki Matson-Green on the other hand had a different experience, one that she said she found confusing as a young child. She recalled growing up knowing that she was Aboriginal, but at school was told that Tasmanian Aborigines had died out, which left her wondering just how she fitted into society. Despite this, she insisted that she knew who she was.⁵³ A similar set of responses might be expected from mainland Tasmanian families as in the case of the of the Hearps family, with at least one, possibly two generations unaware of their Aboriginality until recent times.

A similar situation evolved among Betty Thomas's descendants as a result of what happened to Tiger and his brothers. In *Unearthed*, Taylor tells the story of the Simpson brothers, including 'Tiger' who served in World War One and how their fortunes disappeared. In the late 19th century the Simpson brothers were all doing well for themselves on Kangaroo Island, where they owned over 12,000 acres of land with Nat, the oldest son being a Justice of the Peace; he and his brothers being voted onto the local council and being accepted as members of the local cricket team. But despite their wealth and position they were not socially accepted.⁵⁴ Unable to marry local girls, those without filial connections on Kangaroo Island, according to Taylor and some of the locals she interviewed, soon found whatever success they may have achieved earlier, fade away as a lack of family to help work the land, drought and financial downturns spelt disaster for 'Tiger' and his older brothers, resulting in them walking away with a sense of despair. Racial prejudice would deny them a future despite the years of hard work they had put in, they were never going to be accepted on account of their Aboriginal grandmother. To avoid the stigma endured by 'Tiger' and his brothers, later generations did their best to either hide their Aboriginal heritage or to

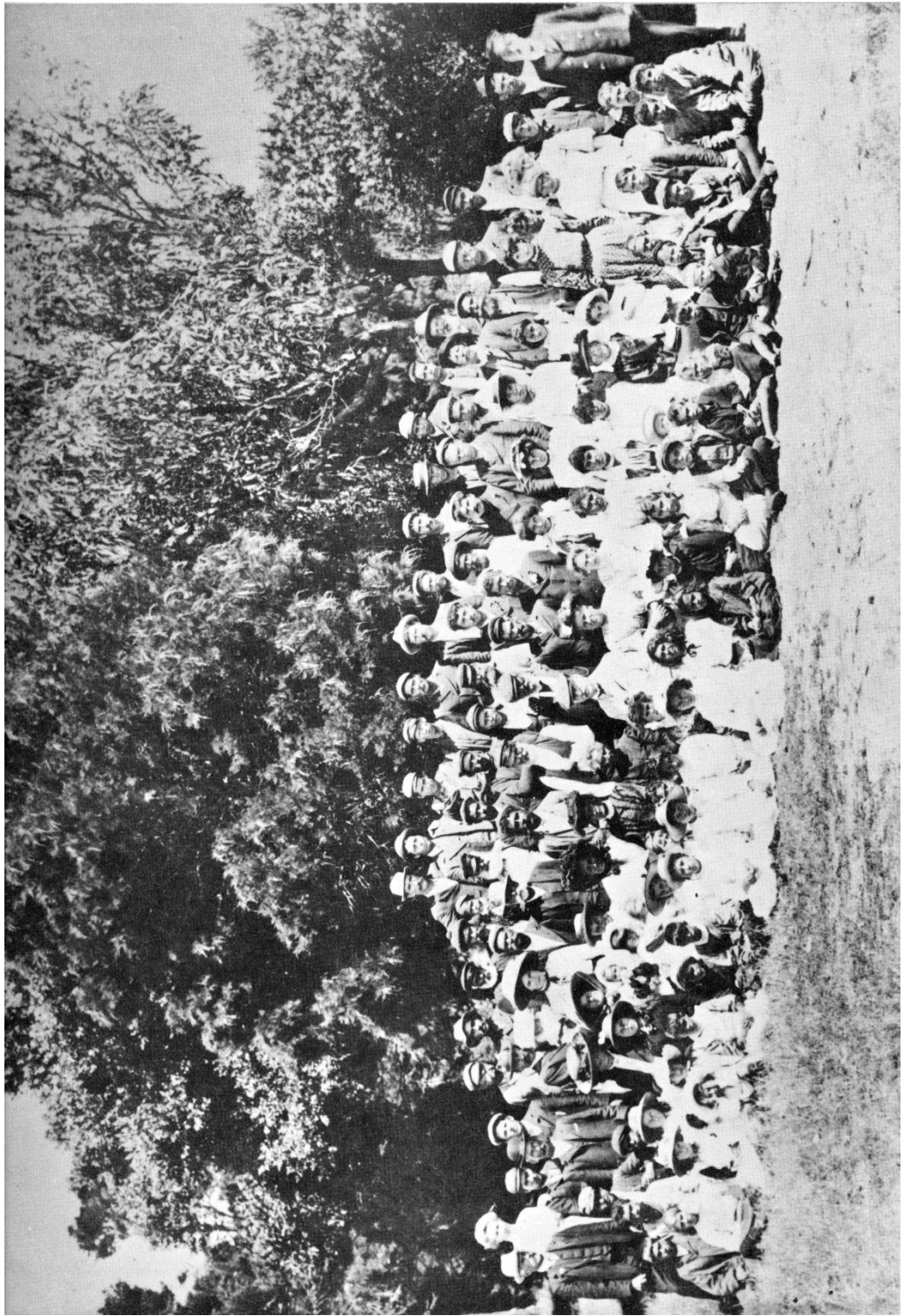
⁵² *Black man's Houses*, Steve Thomas Director with John Moore 1992 DVD.

⁵³ *'Blackman's Houses'* Steve Thomas Director

⁵⁴ R. Taylor, *Unearthed*, p.220

deny any connections with Betty Thomas, with some only finding out in recent years about their Aboriginal ancestry.

As expressed by Steve Stanton, it is more than simply a question of ancestry and skin colour or facial features, but about belonging, a feeling within. No longer referred to as 'half-caste' or any other derogatory name by government officials, newspapers or the scientific world, anti-discrimination laws have ensured, with a somewhat limited degree of success, that Australian Aborigines are equal under the law and acknowledged as citizens of Australia. Yet, as the following chapter will demonstrate, legislative and administrative hurdles in place in the early 20th century had to be overcome by those Tasmanian Aboriginal men who were keen to enlist.



**Illustration 10: 1911 Visit of Governor Henry Barron and his wife to
Cape Barren Island**

Back Row (left to right)

Sam Barrett (w), Richard (Dick) Davey (w), Sam Riddle (w), Percy Burgess, Tasman Smith, James Armstrong Maynard, Andrew Armstrong Maynard, Stanley Morton Maynard, Not identified, **Julian Clifford Everett**, John Summers (w)

Second Row, standing

Joseph Maynard, Harry Armstrong jnr, Edward Smith, Benvenuto Stanley Everett holding Albert Stanley Everett, Henry 'Lagger' Maynard, Benjamin Maynard, Ron Thomas, **John Harold Robinson (Holt)**, James 'Long Island Jim' Maynard, **Allan Montgomery Burgess**, James Thomas Mansell snr, Edgar Leopold Maynard, **Claude Eyre Brown**, John 'Johnny boy' Philip Maynard, Henry William 'Bunny' Brown, Benjamin Maynard snr, Percy Edward Burgess, Philip James Smith

Third Row, standing

Captain James Bladon (w), Mary Bladon (w), William A. Riddle (w), John Fisher, Vic Barrett (w), unidentified, Gus Knight, holding Allan Knight (w), John Maynard, William Maynard, unidentified, Isaac Thomas Beeton, John Smith jnr, Captain Philip Thomas, John 'Jack' Thomas snr, Herbert Thomas Burgess, Cleta Dora Mansell, Elsie Lavinia Smith, Alma Glesire Mansell, Maggie Smith, Caroline Frances Brown, unidentified, Madge Victoria Mansell, Julia Mary Sarah Burgess, Charlie Jones (w) John Arthur West, Francis Hooker Archer (w)

Fourth row, kneeling

James Vivian Gladstone Mansell, John Nance Mansell, **Archibald Douglas Mansell**, Leila Thomas Maynard, unidentified, Vicki Riddle (w) M. Riddle (w), Mrs Knight, Alberta Brown, Mabel Archer (w) Mrs Riddle holding William (w) unidentified, Augusta Lavinia Mansell, Henrietta Olive Victoria Brown, Esther Lily Brown, Doris Esme Brown, Elizabeth Rosetta Maynard, Amelia Smith, unidentified, Francis Mary Smith, Violet Gorda Mansell, Isabella Smith, Iris Smith, unidentified, Irene Thomas, Nance Mansell, ? Mansell, Sir Henry Barron, Lily May Mansell, Beatrice Evelyn Maynard, Lucy Isabel Maynard, Julia Ann Burgess, Emily Alice Everett Maynard, Esther Lily Everett, Elizabeth (Betsy) Smith, Clara Jane Mansell, John William Brown, Nellie Louise Mansell, unidentified, Jack Vale Maynard, Mrs Farquhar holding Irwin Knight (w), Lily Everett, Donald James Thomas Mansell, Isaac James Thomas Mansell, Benjamin William Brown, Fred Howard (w) John Maynard, Ben George Brown, Geoff Archer (w) William John Green (w) George Ernest Mansell, **Willard Stanley Brown**

Names in bold volunteered for service in the First World War.

Original image taken by John Watt Beattie. A copy appeared in the *Weekly Courier* 19 January 1911, p19



Illustration 11: A studio image of Fanny Cochrane and husband William Smith, taken later in their lives. Source: AA338-2-ROBEISON -16 South Australian Museum



Illustration 12: Nicholls Rivulet Football Team (1913)

Back Row: Cyril H. Miller, **William Charles Miller**, Charles R. Cowen, Leslie Miller, William Henry Smith jnr.

Third Row: William Miller, Clyde A. Bone, Walter A. Bone, **Charles James Arthur Miller**, Percy H. Sculthorpe, **Augustus Eugene 'Gus' Smith**

Second Row: William H. Smith, Joseph Smith, **Albert Charles Edward Smith**, Osborne W. Bone, John Heeney, Frederick M. Wass, Balfour Stains Miller

Front Row: E. Gordon, unnamed, unnamed, **Archie Wilmore Smith**

Names in bold – men from this study who enlisted in the first Australian Imperial Force.

Source: David Coad, *Port Cygnet 1900 – 1914*, p111

Chapter 3

On the eve of war

Cape Barren Island,

21 November 1911

To Mr Howroyd,

Parliament House,

Hobart, Tasmania.

Sir,

We, the undersigned residents of the Reserve on Cape Barren Island, entreat you to use your very best endeavours to prevent certain Regulations that are about to be placed before Parliament being carried or passed through.

The Homestead Block is not large enough; it should be five acres each.

That the requirements and restrictions put on the Agricultural Blocks are too severe, and we do not see our way to carry them out.

That we do not require any person to oversee and rule over us, as we are quite capable of managing our own respective blocks.

That we have been given to understand that all unmarried girls and women over the age of 18 years are compelled to take a Homestead Block and Agricultural Block, as that will be most desirable.

That the lease free of rent be given within six months.

We would suggest that a Committee be appointed among ourselves, and that as we are quite capable of managing our own affairs, and know our requirements for the Reserve, and that any regulations we may make be submitted to Parliament and on approval to be made lawful. (signed by 72 residents)

On the eve of the First World War, Australia was a land of contrasts with basically two groups of people: those who were 'white' under the meaning of the Immigration Restriction Act and were therefore considered citizens with all the rights that went with it, whether born here or naturalised, and 'non-whites' including Australian Aborigines. In the minds of some, Aborigines were considered not to have 'reached that standard of civilization to understand, much less assimilate' and as such were marginalised with many people's lives being closely managed under the auspices of a number of state based Aboriginal Protection Acts.¹ The Chinese were in a similarly

¹ W. O. Mansbridge, 'A Scheme for Training the Aboriginal Natives in the Northern Portions of the Commonwealth' *Military Journal*, January 1912, pp.99-100; examples of Aboriginal Protection Acts – 'An Act for the Protection and Management of the Aboriginal Natives of Victoria 1869, 33 Victoria No. 349' ; 'The Aboriginal Protection and Restrictions on the Sale of Opium Act 1897' No. 17 (Queensland) and 'The Aborigines Protection Act 1909[short title] No 25 (New South Wales)

disadvantaged situation, despite the fact that some members of the community had been resident in Australia for several generations.

This chapter argues that while Aboriginal people were marginalised under the legislative and administrative frameworks that governed military training and service in the pre-war period, but this did not dampen their enthusiasm to enlist. In this chapter I examine the White Australia Policy and how it impacts on the Defence Act in relation to Aboriginal people. I also consider the implementation of the universal training scheme for Australia's youths and the extent to which young Aboriginal men in isolated Tasmanian communities were excluded from participation. I also look at the impact of the declaration of war on the remote Aboriginal community of Cape Barren Island.

In 1901 the fathers of Federation felt that Australia needed to be protected at all cost against an 'influx of aliens, Asiatics, [sic] criminals, paupers and other undesirable classes.'² There was a fear amongst many in the community that large-scale foreign immigration would have an impact on wages. Politicians in particular worried that the 'creation of a racially-based, political underclass, living on very low wages which meant they could only afford sub-standard housing, food and clothing would undermine the egalitarian society which most democratically-minded people wanted Australia to be.'³ In order to secure its borders and to maintain a European based civilization the 'White Australia' policy was developed as a 'defensive reaction by a society acutely conscious of its small population in relation to the geographical area it was seeking to hold and effectively occupy.'⁴ Much of the motivation came from a racism that had its origins on the goldfields of Victoria, and a desire to protect hard won living standards which were the envy of many other countries.

The passing of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, effectively excluded non-white migrants from gaining access to Australia as well as providing a mechanism through which the authorities could deport non-Europeans already living in the country. Australia's Aborigines though, could not be deported under the legislation. There was an expectation among many in the community that like the Tasmanian Aborigines they too would be expected to 'die out in the fullness of time.' Legislators hoped that the

² D. Day, The 'White Australia' Policy [online] in C. Bridge and B. Attard, *Between Empire and Nation: Australia's External Relations from Federation to the Second World War* (Kew, 2000),

³ K. Windschuttle, The White Australia Policy [online] *The Sydney Papers* Vol 17, No. 3-4 Winter/Spring 2005 p.131

⁴ D. Day, *The White Australia Policy*

same would apply to the predominantly male Chinese community. An apparatus of discriminatory laws was put in place in the hope of encouraging Chinese and other Asiatic peoples to leave rather than need to be deported. The introduction of a dictation test for immigrants 'allowed racial exclusion under the guise of an educational test,' but one that was not objected to by Great Britain, anxious not to offend countries such as Japan that were increasingly becoming a naval ally in the Pacific.⁵

Serving in times of peace as in war:

While vigorously 'defending' Australia's shores from non-Europeans, in the opinion of Jeffrey Grey, the military defence of its shores was at the same time receiving very little attention. Not until after Japan's naval victory over the Russians in 1905 did this situation change when there was a concerted push by the National Defence League, made up of a group of powerful and influential individuals including W.M. Hughes, to bring the defence of Australia out of the shadows with the passing of legislation that would require Australia's young men to undergo some form of military training.⁶ On 1 January 1911 amendments to the *Defence Act* were passed in the Federal Parliament introducing a scheme of universal and mandatory military training for all males between the ages of 12 and 25. The Act required all boys between 12 and 14 to become junior cadets and all between 14 and 18 to serve in senior cadets.⁷ Once they reached 18 years, they then became members of the Citizen Military Force.

It was predicted that of the 188,000 eligible senior cadets around Australia, 100,000 would be under training when the scheme finally matured. A simple medical examination was used to weed out those who should be given an exemption on health grounds, whether permanently, for those with physical handicaps, or temporary, for those clearly in poor health. Further exemptions were given to those who lived too far away from training facilities to reasonably be expected to attend.⁸ While apparently there was no exemption for anyone applying on religious grounds, any such people could be allotted to non-combatant duties instead. Also to be allotted to non-

⁵ D. Day, *The White Australia Policy*

⁶ J. Grey, , *A Military History of Australia* (Cambridge, 2008), p.74

⁷ C. Stockings, 'Australia's Boy Soldiers; The army cadet movement' in C. Stockings and J. Connor, eds., *Before the Anzac Dawn: A military history of Australia to 1915* (Sydney, 2013) p.195

⁸ J. Barrett, *Falling In; Australians and 'Boy Conscripts' 1911-1915* (Marrickville, 1979) pp.70-71

combatant duties were those who 'were not substantially of European origin or descent': they were however, still required to be part of the cadet system, regardless of the colour of their skin. The fact that distinctions were drawn along racial lines can be seen as a prelude to what was to come three years later at the beginning of the First World War.

Far from being universal, it was in fact a scheme that provided military training only to urban youths and those in towns or areas with a sufficient population base to produce at least 60 boys liable for senior cadet training. This provision in the act meant that many boys living in country towns and centres right round Australia, were in fact exempt and not liable under the Act. This is borne out by an examination of the Attestation Papers for those wishing to join the Australian Imperial Force, where many claimed to have been exempt (reasons usually unspecified) from having served previously in either the Militia, the Militia Reserve, Territorial Forces or Colonial Forces.⁹ This applied to Flinders Island and Cape Barren Island located on the north-east tip of Tasmania where there was insufficient population base on either island or as a combined group to support a senior cadet corps, despite representations being made in 1911 by schoolmaster Captain J. M. Bladon. Just how many Tasmanian youths would have been liable for training under this scheme is open to debate given that in 1911 Tasmania was a heavily rural based economy with many small towns that would have struggled to produce the required number for a senior cadet corps.

On Cape Barren Island Schoolmaster Bladon found other obstacles stood in his way, apart from a lack of numbers required for the formation a senior cadet corps. Even if he had been able to get his wish, he would have then had to face the issue as to whether some of the Straitsmen would qualify as being of 'substantially European origin or descent. The number of settler Australians living on either island being very small. This was also at a time when the Commonwealth Attorney General was yet to give his opinion as to whether the Cape Barren Islanders with their mixed heritage were in fact Aborigines. If not, then Bladon's next problem would have been what type of training, if any, could he have given them under this new legislation.

From Bladon's correspondence with Tasmanian Premier Lewis in January 1911, he made his intentions towards the island's youth quite clear: that they should be inculcated with the principles of discipline and patriotism 'required of a citizen of the

⁹ Question 11 on the Attestation Paper of Persons enlisted for Service Abroad

empire.’ Such sentiments were similar to those expressed in relation to the earlier cadet organisation started in the previous century, but also reflect Bladon’s own personal views which were contemporaneous with earlier attitudes.¹⁰ Bladon’s request for rifles for the men whom he hoped to train also indicates that he intended to take things a step further, by providing them with some form of military training which may have been contrary to the legislation. Bladon full of good rather high minded intentions seems not to have thought through his plans or intentions sufficiently in light of the legislation itself and does indicate that a lack of understanding of the legislation as it stood at that time.

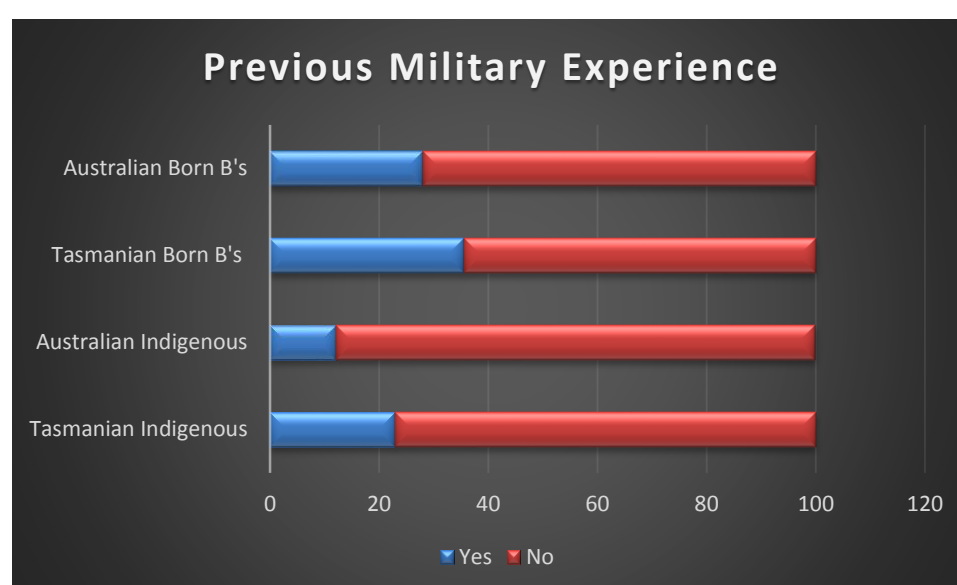


Figure 2: A comparison of men who had previous military experience by prior to volunteering for the Australian Imperial Force based on their answers to Question 11 on the Attestation Papers.

	Tasmanian Indigenous	Australian Indigenous	Tasmanian Born B's	Australian Born B's
Yes	17(22.9)	18(12.1)	61(35.5)	45(28.1)
No	57(77.0)	130(87.8)	111(64.5)	115(71.8)

While the youths on Cape Barren and Flinders Islanders were exempt from the universal scheme, others were not. Using the information about previous military experience recorded on the Attestation Papers for each person in this study it was

¹⁰ Premiers Office Records PD 108/2/11 p138 TAHO

possible to determine that 17 or just under 23% of the Tasmanian Aborigines had had previous military experience either through the cadet system or with the local militia.¹¹ At least five men stated that they had served with the cadets. These included Alfred Hearps from Queenstown and his cousins Charles Hearps from Devonport and George Hearps from Latrobe. Alfred Hearps was, in fact, busily working his way up through the ranks when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. At age 15 Percy Anderson had joined the senior cadets in Launceston, while Harold Sellers from Scottsdale served with the local cadets and then the 92nd Regiment.¹² Cyril Johnson from Sheffield and his cousin Cyril Kennedy from Forth both stated that they had three years' experience with the Tasmanian Rangers, while Edward Lee was serving with the 26th Light Horse based at Wynyard on the state's north-west coast. Not all were caught up in the changes requiring eligible youths to undertake military training. Certainly Alfred Hearps was, but others such as his cousins from Sheffield were not. Clearly men such as Cyril Johnson and Cyril Kennedy had made a choice to enlist as had Edward Lee and their aboriginality had not been a barrier to their participation.

As Figure 2 illustrates just over twelve per cent of Australian Aborigines who subsequently enlisted stated that they had previous military experience. Urban rather than rural Aborigines would have been involved with many rural centres, not having had a sufficient population of young men who would have fallen under the ambit of the legislation, meaning that large areas of Australia were exempt. In contrast, between a quarter and a third of men in the two 'B' cohorts stated that they had had some form of military experience prior to enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force, whether through the cadet system, volunteering for service in the Boer War, having been in either the Royal Navy or the militia, which would suggest that many of these men came from either urban areas or large rural communities.

While the Straitsmen were exempt under the regulations, others of Tasmanian Aboriginal descent, including Douglas and Lionel Cox who were living in Melbourne, simply chose to evade service with the cadets. If questioned, several would have been able to state that they lived in an exempt area: for the remainder though, they appear to have chosen not to be involved. Non-compliance under the Defence Act could result

¹¹ None had served in the Boer War

¹² NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #409 Alfred John Hearps; #207 Charles Hearps; #T9141 Percy Alfred Anderson and #1709 Harold Thomas Sellers

in the offender being prosecuted. For some historians, these prosecutions have been seen as evidence of a community backlash towards the introduction of the system. But as Jeff Grey points out, these figures need to be seen in perspective with around only 2 per cent of those eligible having actually registered for training.¹³ Many prosecuted were in fact repeat offenders, while others were for minor infringements of the regulations, not necessarily symptomatic of a backlash against the system. George Hearps appeared to have been the only one among the Tasmanian Aborigines willing to admit that he had previous convictions for failing to attend drill.¹⁴ Popular or not, the universal military training scheme was begrudgingly accepted by the country at large, perhaps as a result of the fact that its application was far from being universal, with many exemptions being given. While the Tasmanian Aborigines who formed the basis of this study served in the militia at a much lower rate than their settler counterparts, they did not shun the system totally either.

Tasmania on the eve of war:

Following the declaration of war in August 1914, newspapers were quick to publish images of crowds waiting outside their offices anxious for the next snippet of news, or of the queues lined up outside recruiting offices waiting for their chance to enlist in the expeditionary force. These positive images belie what was happening in other places around Australia such as in Tasmania where there was growing unrest among miners and men who derived much of their income from lucrative German markets. Germany had provided Tasmania with the biggest market for its mineral ores extracted from several areas around the state as well as skins for the fur trade. Without this market, a number of large mines were forced to either shut or to reduce their staff considerably. Out of four mines, which included the large Renison Bell Mine and Mt Bischoff Mine, around eight hundred men suddenly found themselves unemployed and with little hope of finding work in another mine close by as mines in the north-west and north-east were also affected.¹⁵

Another group severely affected by the announcement of hostilities were the men who earned their living from trapping wallabies, rabbits and possums for the lucrative European fur trade. One of the largest European importers was based in Leipzig. Not

¹³ J. Grey, *A Military History of Australia* p.80; in the period 1911 to 1913 there were some 27,749 prosecutions resulting in the offender serving terms of detention or imprisonment.

¹⁴ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier # 3478 George Clarence Hearps

¹⁵ M. Lake, *A Divided Society: Tasmania during World War One*, (Clayton, 1975) p.18

only were they cut off from their markets, but many trappers and buyers were left with thousands of pounds of furs that were now without a ready market. Like the miners, the trappers and buyers looked to the government for help, but the best the politicians were prepared to do was to extend the public works program to include many new roads, railways, and bridges in the hope of providing more jobs for those who were otherwise unemployed.¹⁶ This was seen by some workers as charity, not real jobs that paid the rent and put food on the table. It is not surprising that out of the six hundred and forty men who registered in the first days of the recruiting depot opening in August 1914, two hundred and forty two (38%) were from the mining towns of Queenstown, Zeehan, and Waratah, all towns hard hit by the closure of the mines or laying off of staff.¹⁷

On the islands of Bass Strait, life moved at a much slower pace with many of the issues that vexed those on mainland Tasmania passing its inhabitants by. They had their own concerns which centred on island life – getting goods on and off the islands, providing a decent standard of education for the island's children, the provision of a reasonable standard of health and being able to maintain some kind of contact with the outside world. Weather conditions in Bass Strait often prevented shipping from calling at the islands, meaning that people were regularly cut off from contact except through the all-important wireless. Goods that had to be shipped in, including tinned food were very expensive, and so the Straitsmen simply made do with what they had.

On the eve of war, life for many of Cape Barren Island's inhabitants had changed irrevocably: most of the adults, at least, were struggling to adapt to the changes forced on them by the state government with the adoption of the Cape Barren Island Act 1912. The frontier life that many of the first and second generation of sealers and their indigenous wives would have known was now a distant memory as islands they had previously occupied or used were leased to outsiders and land opened up for large scale farming. The remaining Islanders were forced on to a small corner of Cape Barren Island away from the mutton-bird rookeries and islands where they had previously made their homes.¹⁸ In 1913 the last of the commercial sealing operations ceased, breaking a tradition that stretched back around one hundred years. There was no longer a market for the skins, and few people remembered how to kill, skin, and cure

¹⁶ M. Lake, *A Divided Society*, p.18

¹⁷ M. Lake, *A Divided Society*, p.8

¹⁸ See Chapter 2 'A Dying Race'

the seals as the older members of the community passed away.¹⁹ As boat building also wound down, mutton birding remained the only traditional activity that many would be involved in and rely on for income. This meant that the Straitsmen were forced to look to other forms of employment such as mining and labouring whether on the islands or on mainland Tasmania.

Another more dramatic change for the predominantly indigenous community was the passage of the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act of 1912 which in effect gave control to the government of Tasmania over the lives and welfare of the Aborigines living there.²⁰ The Act was the Tasmanian government's response to the missionaries and other interested parties who, over the decades since the reserve land was set aside in 1881, had endeavoured to ameliorate the living conditions of the island's inhabitants.

An area of six thousand acres (or 2,428 hectares) of land had been set aside and gazetted in 1881 as part of the government's acknowledgement that there were still members of the state's indigenous people living, and as compensation for their forced removal from their homes, on mainland Tasmania.²¹ The area of land set aside on the western portion of the island was generally poor, consisting of scrub and lagoons, and therefore unsuitable for agriculture except by laborious physical work and the spending of considerable sums of money which none of the islanders possessed. With the assistance of the Rev. Canon Marcus Brownrigg, who was a frequent visitor to the islands, a site for a new township was chosen at The Corner, the current site of the island's main community.

In January 1908 the residents discovered that Cape Barren Island was now part of the Flinders Municipality and that the council was expecting them to pay rates and taxes, which they refused to do. Police Commissioner James Lord was dispatched to investigate their living conditions 'with a view to preparing legislation to regularise their occupation of the reserve,' something that the government had failed to do in 1881.²² The Islanders left Commissioner Lord in no doubt about their position – that they still believed that the reserve should be granted to them outright and that the mutton-bird industry should be reserved for their exclusive use, a position reiterated

¹⁹ B. Mollison & C. Everitt, *A Chronology of Events Affecting Tasmanian Aboriginal People Since Contact by Whites (1772-1976)*

²⁰ *Cape Barren Island Reserve Act of 1912* 3 Geo V No. 16

²¹ L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, p.292

²² L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, p.292

when Governor Sir Harry Barron, the Premier and other officials visited the island in January 1911. This was a long held view. A letter to the editor of the *Examiner* newspaper of 1883 informed readers that they believed that 'whatever land they [Tasmanian government] had reserved for our [Aborigines] use is a token of their honesty, inasmuch as it has been given in lieu of that grand island [Tasmania] which they have taken from our ancestors.'²³ James Young, in a letter to the Premier, mentioned 'innumerable documents, charts & references ... referring to this reservation as being that of the 'half-castes and their descendants.'²⁴ Outsiders also believed that this land had been set aside for the 'half-castes'. On the eve of war, this was the same position held by the Straitsmen as they battled with a government determined to place some control over them and their movements.

New legislation was drafted that took into account a number of Lord's recommendations, but also looked to other protectionist legislation that had been enacted elsewhere to control a perceived growing 'half-caste problem.' There were a number of examples to choose from, as more Aboriginal people were being segregated from the rest of the Australian population onto reserves to undergo preparation to eventual assimilation.²⁵ Under the new legislation, the reserve and the Islanders would now become the responsibility of the Lands Department, with the secretary of lands under the direction of the minister, exercising 'a general supervision and care over all matters affecting the interests and welfare of the residents of the Reserve.'²⁶ All the reserve land would revert to the Crown and be resurveyed for subdivision into homestead blocks of a quarter-acre (1,012 square metres) and agricultural blocks of 50 acres (20 hectares) to be applied for under strict conditions.²⁷ Alcohol was banned from the reserve under the new legislation. While provisions were

²³ *Examiner*, 30 May 1883, p.3

²⁴ J. Young to the Premier of Tasmania, 7 January 1911, Premier's Office Records PD1/237, Vol. 238, 14 TAHO

²⁵ K. Harman, 'Protecting Tasmanian Aborigines: American and Queensland Influences on the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1912' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol 41, Issue 5, p.4 [online version]

²⁶ K. Harman, 'Protecting Tasmanian Aborigines: American and Queensland Influences on the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act, 1912' p15 [online version] Tasmanian government retained control over its Aboriginal people until the 1967 Referendum at which point the commonwealth assumed this role; L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, p.294

²⁷ All Islanders over the age of 18 were eligible to apply for a block of land. They had two years to erect a house on the homestead block and had to live in it for at least 6 months of the year. After 5 years they would become rent-free. Agricultural blocks had to be 'satisfactorily used.' Licences could be cancelled by the minister for Lands if the licensed occupier defaulted.

made in the legislation for the seizure and destroying of alcohol when found within the prohibited area, it did little or nothing about those who were supplying the 'deadly firewater' which was seen as problematic. Another objectionable aspect of the legislation was that the local schoolteacher could determine which non-islander people could enter the reserve.²⁸

There were a number of objections to the proposed legislation from both sides of the community. Some felt that the Islanders would be better off if they were forced to assimilate with the wider community, mixing and working with white people, and learning to be industrious rather than indolent. The Islanders objected to the legislation, stating that the size of the proposed blocks of a quarter of an acre was too small and the requirements to obtain an agricultural block were too restrictive, and the five year period before the beginning of the rent-free period as being too long. Instead, they proposed that homestead blocks should be five acres in size, and the rent-free lease begin after one year. Instead of a manager, the residents proposed that an 'Islander management committee should be empowered to make regulations for their own welfare and determine who would enter the reserve'.²⁹

Eventually some compromise was reached, with the rent-free period starting after three years and homestead blocks increased to five acres. The idea of self-management was rejected and while the 'Islanders by virtue of the Aboriginal ancestry... had a 'moral' right to the reserve, they could have no 'legal' right until they had satisfied the conditions of the act.'³⁰ The Cape Barren Island Reserve Act 1912 finally became law on 6 December 1912. On the eve of World War 1 the reserve had been resurveyed, and twenty-seven families had been issued licences of occupation, with many of them having erected new homes, laid out gardens and purchased cattle and horses, new roads were also being constructed.³¹

While outwardly painting a positive picture to any visitor, the new legislation failed to recognise the Islanders' right to self-determination, instead controlling their lives in

²⁸ Captain James Bladon who succeeded Mr Knight in 1911, constantly pushed himself forward as a go-between for the government and the Islanders, but was in fact trying to shore up his own position in the community aiming to be the sole authority over the inhabitants.

²⁹ L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, p.295

³⁰ L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, p.295

³¹ These homes were usually 2-3 rooms, built of wood and by community members. At least one example of an early home still stands in an overgrown paddock on the road towards the airport from The Corner

ways they had never experienced previously using European laws and values.³² This included their very movements to and from the reserve through the erection of a fence around the area. The fence being an object of much resentment then and for the next two generations at least with those living outside the reserve requiring permission to visit family on the reserve and to have vacated it by sundown.³³ As stated by Lyndall Ryan, the Cape Barren Island Act, like similar legislation establishing Aboriginal reserves in other Australian states,

‘reflected the legal contradiction surround the recognition of Aboriginal rights. On the one hand it asserted that by virtue of their race the Islanders required special government regulation yet on the other hand it refused to recognise their race as Aboriginal.’³⁴

Such changes may have been a catalyst for some of the young men leaving to enlist during the First World War; a way of escaping the new regime. Others may have taken up the challenge laid down by schoolmaster Captain James Bladon to prove themselves not only equal to the white settlers, but also being loyal subjects by volunteering for enlistment in the First Australian Imperial Force. Motivations for enlistment by these men will be covered in the next chapter. Despite resentment for the new regime and the restrictions it imposed, islanders were still prepared to support the war effort through a raft of activities: by making items of clothing to send to the front, fund raising through sports days where prize money was handed over to the Active Service War Fund, as well as through entertainment and sale of items such as shell necklaces with the proceeds going to various groups such as the Red Cross, Belgium Relief Fund and the 40th Battalion Comforts Fund.³⁵ Even the school children got involved; donating a penny a week for a twelve month period.³⁶ By 1919, the Cape Barren Islanders had made a significant contribution to the war effort, through the sacrifice of their men and their work in providing items and money for various charities supporting the refugees displaced by war and the soldiers at the front.

The White Australia Policy, in place since 1901, refused entry to people from Asia and other places that, the country’s policy makers felt, threatened the Australian way of

³² L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, p.295

³³ V. Matson-Green ‘Tasmanian 2: ‘You cannot deny me and mine any longer’ in A. McGrath ed., *Contested Ground: Australian Aborigines under the British Crown*, p.347

³⁴ L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, p.295

³⁵ *The Examiner*, 24 June 1916, p.8 and 3 July 1917, p.2

³⁶ *The Examiner*, 24 June 1916, p.8

life. In the early years of Federation, defence was not a high priority for most Federal parliamentarians, but following Japan's victory over the Russians in 1905 many started to question how Australia would defend herself from attack. It would take several more years, but eventually with the backing of the National Defence League, a system of compulsory military training for Australia's young men was introduced in 1911. While it was supposed to be universal, there were many exemptions applied, and among those to miss out were the young Straitsmen on Cape Barren Island whom schoolmaster Captain James Bladon felt would have benefitted greatly from such training had he been given permission and the equipment to do so.

On the eve of war, life for the Straitsmen on Cape Barren Island had changed irrevocably with the introduction of the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act of 1912. Their lives would from now on be controlled in a way that they had never experienced before. The way of life that members of the community had carved out in the early days of settlement through sealing and mutton birding was now just a distant memory. Against this backdrop of administrative and legal hurdles a number of young men from this and other Tasmanian communities volunteered for active service in World War 1 as will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.



Illustration 13: The Governor of Tasmania Sir Henry Barron with Captain James Bladon and Mrs Bladon and Cape Barren Island school children on his visit to the island in 1911. Source: Furneaux Historical Research Association Inc. FHP01222 001

Back row (left to right): Caroline Burgess, Julie Burgess, Myrtle Everett, Maggie Smith, Cleta Brown, **Cliff Everett**, Len Maynard, **Geoff Archer**, **Willard Brown**, Ben Brown, **Archie Mansell**, Vivian Mansell

Third row: Captain Bladon, Lillie Mansell, Madge Mansell, Emily Maynard, Phillip Thomas, Betsy Smith, Sir Henry Barron, Beattie Maynard, Irene Thomas, Jane Everett, Violet Mansell, Sara Everett, Mrs Bladon

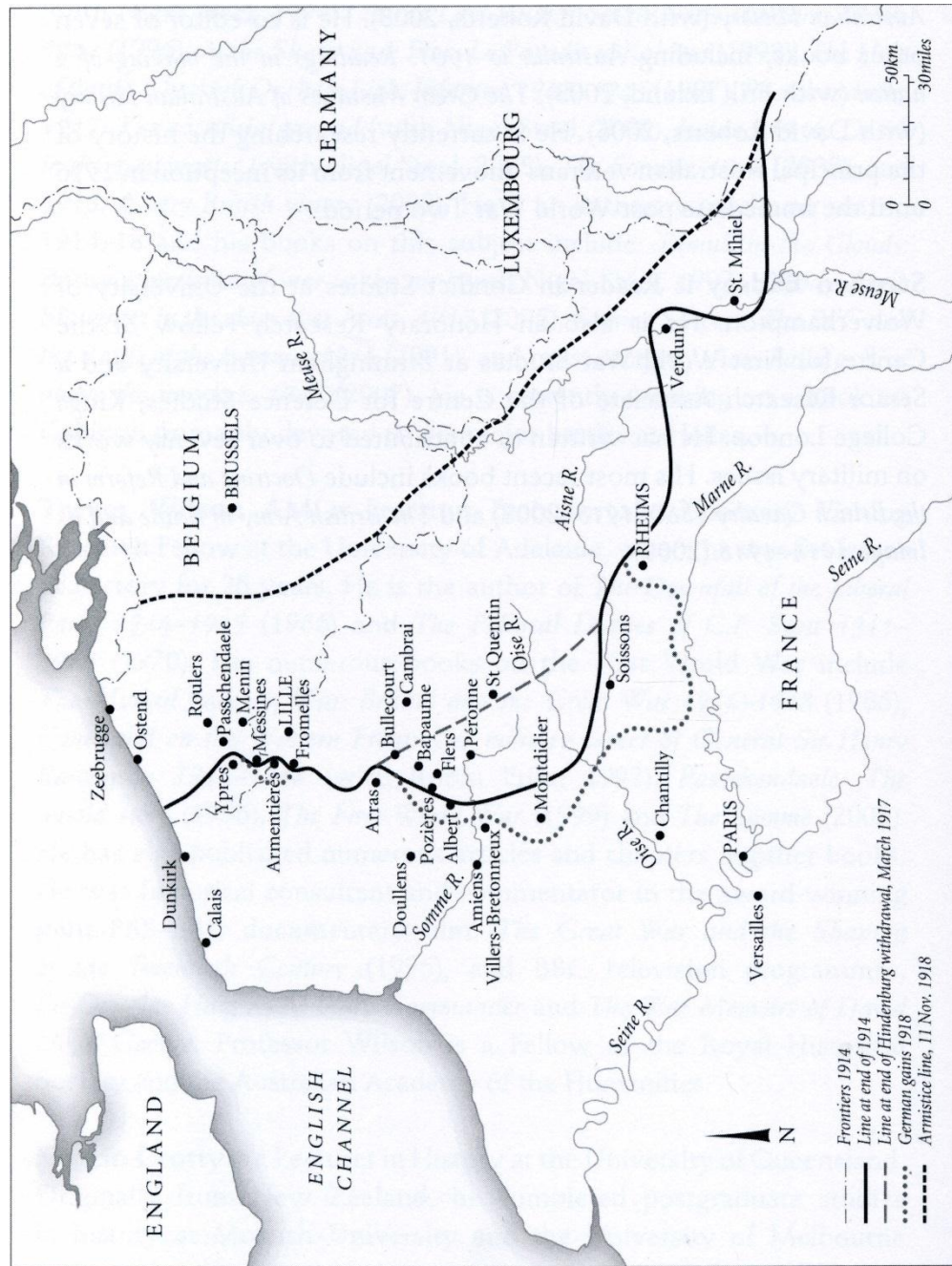
Second Row: Ervin Knight, Greta Archer, Lillie Everett, Henrietta Brown, Iris Thomas, Gussie Maynard, Leila Maynard, Frances Thomas, Alberta Brown, Lucie Maynard, George Mansell

Front Row: Dick Maynard, Ben Brown, John Brown, Isaac Mansell, Jack Maynard, Howard White, George Everett, Donald Brown, George Mansell

Those named in bold lettering enlisted in the First Australian Imperial Force and include Geoff Archer who enlisted and died at Bullecourt in April 1917.¹

Source: M. Mallett, *My Past – Their Future*, p.44

¹NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #6472, Geoffrey Raymond Downard Archer



The Western Front, 1914-18

Figure 3: Map of the Western Front during World War 1

Source: Ashley Ekins (Ed) 1918: *Year of Victory*, p18

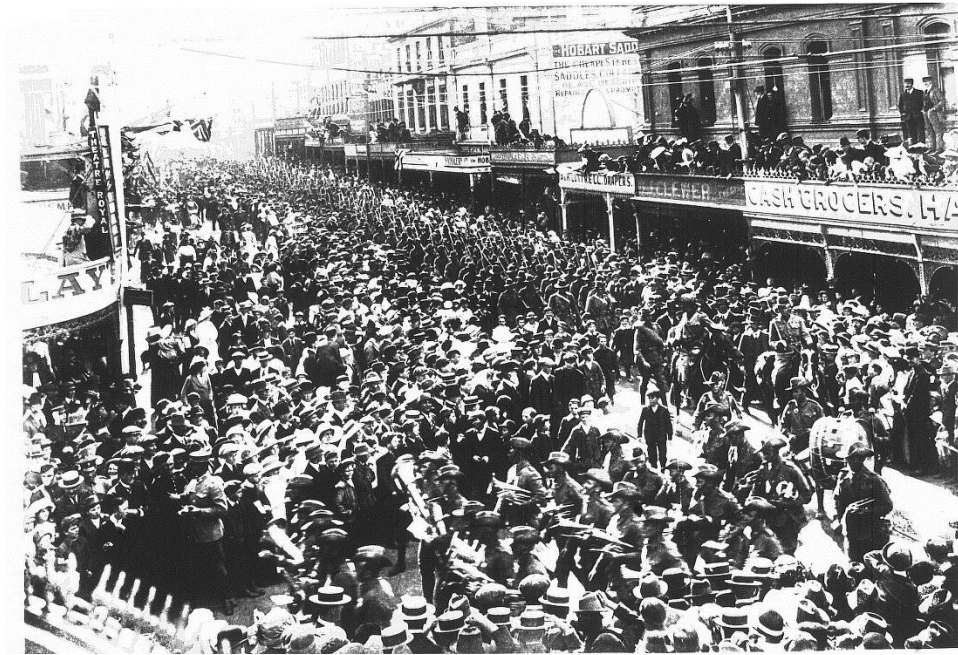


Illustration 14: Large crowds of people braved difficult weather conditions early in October 1914 to farewell the men of the first contingent as they marched through town as a farewell to the people of Hobart led by the band of the 12th Battalion. Source: Weekly Courier



Illustration 15: Despite a media blackout, about the exact date of the departure of the first contingent, crowds still lined both tiers of Ocean Pier to farewell the troops on the SS Geelong which left Hobart on 20 October 1914. Source: Private collection

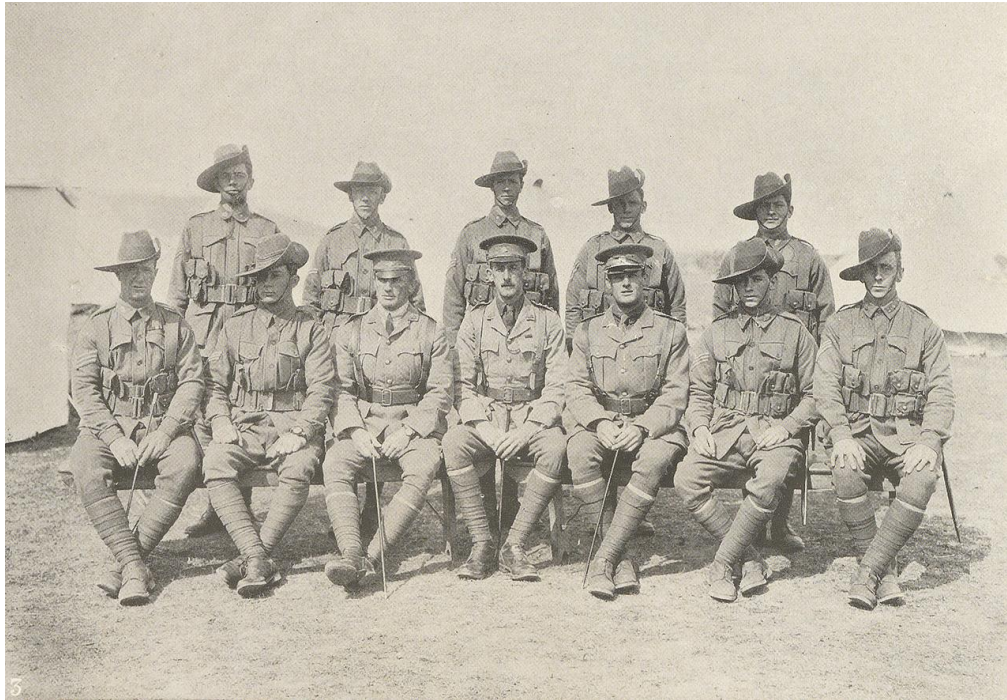


Illustration 16: Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers of 'D' Company, 12th Battalion at Brighton Camp, September 1914. Alfred Hearps is believed to be second from the right, front row. Source: *Weekly Courier* 1 October, 1914, p21

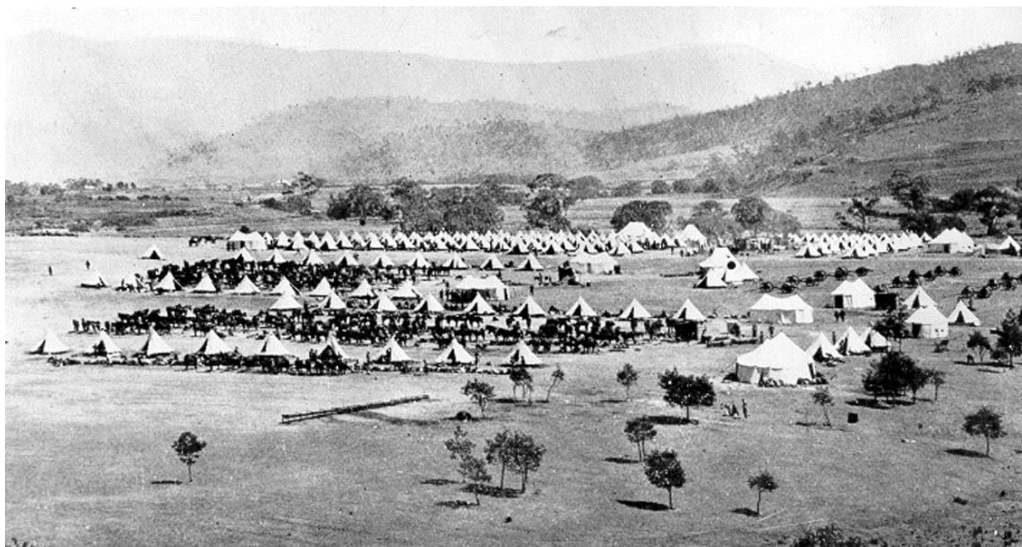


Illustration 17: Brighton Army Camp in 1914. Ten men usually slept in each of the bell tents which were grouped in different areas with separate sections for the men of the 12th Battalion, 9th Field Battery and Light Horse Regiment among others. Source: TAHO PH30-1-5664



Illustration 18: Troops of the 40th Battalion formed up on parade at Claremont Army Camp in 1916 lead by Lieutenant Colonel John. E. Lord and Major J. P. Clark (second in command). Source: Private collection



Illustration 19: Claremont Army Camp with the Claremont Station in the foreground. Source: Private Collection

Chapter 4

‘The pure dinkum Aussies of the A.I.F. were our Aborigine cobbers who donned khaki’¹

‘Why I enlisted’

*I answered the Empire’s call to arms in 1916, of which was my duty and my pleasure and I would willingly answer and do my duty again*²

20 October 1914. On a brisk Hobart morning the men who would form part of the first contingent prepared to bid farewell to their home state. Tied up at the Ocean Pier was the *Geelong* with the *Katuna* docked nearby. Troop trains took the soldiers and their equipment right on to the wharf, where they were greeted by a brass band playing patriotic songs, and a large crowd of families and friends waiting to bid their loved ones a last farewell. Boarding the *Geelong*, amid the streamers, tears and the cheers was Sergeant Alfred John ‘Jack’ Hearps, a young 19 year old clerk from Queenstown about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime. He was one of four sergeants allotted to ‘D’ Company, 12th Battalion.³ His dark complexion, brown eyes and black hair earned him the nickname of ‘darkie’, a moniker more than likely given to him based on his complexion rather than any form of racism, which, if it did exist, was probably covert rather than explicit.⁴

This chapter argues that Tasmanian Aboriginal motivations for enlisting are complex and somewhat elusive. Such motivations can never the less be seen to reflect the men’s working class status which, in turn, was inflected by race and shaped by historic processes of colonisation. In this chapter I briefly consider how many men of Tasmanian indigenous heritage enlisted in the first Australian Imperial Force, who they were, and where they came from, before I examine what drove many of these men to volunteer, particularly as Aborigines were not recognised as citizens or given the most

¹ *Reveille*, 31 October 1931 p.15

² NAA P107/39 C6190 Pension File Claude Eyre Brown, #6477, private 12th Battalion

³ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #409 Alfred John Hearps; L. M. Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, (Hobart, 1925) p.18

⁴ A commonly used form of endearment in the first AIF which was not meant as an insult or a racist remark as they were also used by family members – see postings for Wal Coleman and Albert Leane on www.indigenoushistories.com (accessed 8 March 2014)

basic of rights here in their own country. I also examine the question as to what Aborigines hoped to gain from enlisting.

Answering the War God's Anvil:

Hearps is not a name that immediately springs to mind in conjunction with the Australian Imperial Force. A quick check of the Nominal Rolls shows just six men with that surname, all from the north-west of Tasmania and all related.⁵ Alfred was the first to enlist in August 1914 with Linden the last, having enlisted in November 1917. Cyril, Linden and Wilfred were brothers, while Alfred, Charles and George were cousins.⁶ Alfred was killed in action, while the others survived their experiences. Cyril and George were wounded, both sustaining leg wounds. Charles, despite being 'crimed' twice for offences against the military, was awarded the Military Medal for his actions at Morlancourt in March 1918.⁷ Cyril was also 'crimed' for being absent without leave on more than one occasion, as well as being treated for venereal disease.⁸ The worst that happened to Linden was that he suffered from bronchitis on return to England before returning to Australia in May, 1919.⁹ Wilfred managed to enjoy the sights of Paris while in France and, apart from being admonished after being caught drunk, returned with a clean record as a Shoeing Smith Corporal.¹⁰ With one man killed in action, two others wounded, one receiving an award for bravery and at least one contracting a venereal disease, (the bane of the military authorities in all theatres of the conflict), this is a fairly representative group of the Australian Imperial Force: but whether they could be considered typical is another matter entirely.¹¹

While the records of service for the Hearps boys were representative, there was one thing about this group that was not typical of the Australian Imperial Force as a whole. They were all of indigenous heritage, being the great, great grandchildren of Dalrymple Johnson, daughter of Woretermoeteyenner a native of Cape Portland.

⁵ Australian War Memorial Nominal Rolls awm133-23-0085, www.awm.gov.au/research/people/nominal accessed 21 August 2013

⁶ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #207 Charles Hearps; #900 Cyril Charles Hearps; #3478 George Clarence Hearps; #2360 Linden Louis Hearps and #6241 Wilfred Norton Hearps

⁷ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #207 Charles Hearps; his citation was for his work in bringing up 'his team with a load of ammunition under heavy shell fire and across ground swept by Machine Gun Fire. The supply of ammunition was thus assured against enemy attacks.' www.awm.gov.au/research/people/honours accessed 25 August 2013

⁸ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #900 Cyril Charles Hearps

⁹ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #2360 Linden Louis Hearps

¹⁰ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #6241 Wilfred Norton Hearps

¹¹ M. McKernan, *Gallipoli: A Short History* (Crow's Nest, 2010) p.15

Young Jack and his Hearps cousins were among a group of 74 men of Tasmanian Aboriginal heritage, who during the period 1914 and 1918 volunteered for active service with the Australian Imperial Force. The groupings and backgrounds of these men have been covered in chapter 2. See section 'Fanny, 'Dolly' & Betty'.

Whether they in fact identified themselves as being Aboriginal is a matter for debate and has been discussed at length elsewhere in this thesis?¹² Given the times and situation that these men were born into, it is likely that while they may have been aware of their family history, they chose instead to keep quiet about it, rather than drawing attention to it on the off chance that they might be excluded from enlisting. On the other hand there is the possibility that the older generations chose to keep quiet about the family history rather than face being socially or economically ostracised. Any suggestion that the family were the descendants of Tasmania's Aborigines would have been suppressed in order to save them from any embarrassment and to ensure that they had the best chance of securing regular employment and marrying into the settler community in which they were living. To have been ostracised in anyway would have made life intolerable as was experienced by Tiger Simpson and his brothers on Kangaroo Island.

According to Rebe Taylor who spoke at length with local inhabitants of Kangaroo Island and family members, quite simply, racial prejudice would deny them a future despite the years of hard work they had put in. It would seem that they were never going to be accepted on account of their Aboriginal grandmother. To avoid the stigma attached to being Aboriginal, later generations did their best to either hide or deny any connections with some only finding out in recent years about their Aboriginal ancestry. A similar situation also seems to have applied to some members of the Hearps family at least and may have been the case in other families.

As was seen in the example at the beginning of Chapter 2, of those interviewed by Steve Thomas in 1992, the Straitsmen were well aware that they were the descendants of the native women who were taken to the islands to work with the sealers and who later bore their children and were proud of their heritage.¹³ Unlike the Betty's descendants, with the possible exception of 'Tiger', they did not feel any need to or want to hide their Aboriginality, being proud of who they were and wanting

¹² See Chapter 2 'A Dying Race'

¹³ *Black Man's Houses*, Steve Thomas, Director, 1992 DVD

to remain on the islands to pursue the way of life they had enjoyed for generations. While they may have been seen by government officials as being 'half-castes' to them they were Aborigines.

Returning to Alfred Hearps, whose family called him 'Jack'. What do we know about him as a person and as a soldier? Jack was born on 6 March 1895, the second son of Alfred and Eva Hearps. His older brother had died as an infant. Two sisters arrived much later. Jack went to school at Kindred, a small farming community near Forth, and later at Queenstown.¹⁴ According to information provided by his mother, he was anxious to enlist, leaving Queenstown where he had been living at Harvey's Hotel and travelling to Hobart, the nearest recruiting centre.¹⁵ Having passed the medical examination, he was accepted into the expeditionary force being put together and given the regimental number of 409. How he convinced his parents that this was the right course of action we will never know. If Eva in fact gave Jack her blessing, she must have lived to regret it for the rest of her life when her only son was killed in action at Mouquet Farm.

At nineteen years and five months of age, Jack was unmarried, as were many of the Tasmanian indigenous men who were overwhelmingly single at 84.5 per cent, which is slightly higher than that noted by historian Lloyd Robson who found that 82 per cent were single with 16 per cent being married and a further 2 per cent unknown.¹⁶ With an average age among the Tasmanian Indigenous volunteers of 23 years 6 months, at 19 years, Alfred was among the younger members in this group. He was much younger still when compared with the average age amongst the Letter B Tasmanian recruits as a whole - at 24 years and 8 months.¹⁷ Many of the men who would later come under the control of Sergeant Alfred Hearps were several years older than their young sergeant.¹⁸ Robson's 1970's statistical analysis concluded that the 38 per cent of men he surveyed fell into the 20-24 year old category. A revision of the statistics compiled by Bean, Butler and Robson by David Noonan has shown that ordinary ranks are more

¹⁴ Information supplied by Mrs and Mrs 'Bill' Hearps of Ulverstone who hold some of the records relating to the Kindred State School

¹⁵ Embarkation Roll at www.awm.gov.au/research/people/nominal accessed 25 August 2013

¹⁶ L. L. Robson, 'The Origin and Character of the First A.I.F. 1914-1918: Some Statistical Evidence' *Historical Studies* Volume 15 No. 61, p.739

¹⁷ Figure taken from the Letter B Database provided by Prof. Kris Inwood

¹⁸ G. H. Knibbs, *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia* Volume I Statistician's Report, Chapter IV, (Melbourne, 1917) p.100

likely to be at the upper end of the 20-24 year old age bracket or older still, particularly if they enlisted in 1916 or 1917.¹⁹

On reaching the recruiting depot, a prospective soldier was presented with a copy of an Attestation Form and were then required to fill in the front page giving various personal details and answering questions regarding their past including any civil convictions and past military history. Another question concerned whether the volunteer was a 'natural born British Subject or a Naturalised British Subject'. A person's race on the other hand was not required information. The remainder of the forms would be filled in as the volunteer progressed through the recruitment process which included the passing of the medical examination and beyond.

While much progress has been made towards establishing the number of indigenous enlistees to the Australian Imperial Force, the exact figure may never be known, as many men hid their Aboriginality for fear of being excluded, preferring to state that they were Pacific Islanders, Maori or even Indian when questioned verbally by the recruiting officers. As a way of starting a process by which these men could be identified nationally, a list of names was compiled by the National Archives of Australia under the *Bringing Them Home Project*, commencing in 2002. On commencing the research for this study, a list of the Tasmanians named in the project was provided to the author and while the names of around half were missing from this initial list, it did provide a starting point to locating others who enlisted from this state. The original list contained almost three hundred names and has since grown considerably as further research is undertaken and names are forwarded for inclusion.²⁰

The work now being undertaken through the *Serving Our Country* and the Australian War Memorial will contribute to establishing a final number along with their stories as families come forward. Suffice to say that at this point in time, 74 men of Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestry volunteered for service during the years 1914 and 1918. How many Australia wide is yet to be determined. A recent estimate puts this at 1200. Through the work of Phillip Scarlett the names of 850 men has so far and that the number is still climbing.²¹ According to Gary Oakley, Indigenous Liaison Officer with the Australian War Memorial 'most indigenous soldiers came back to Australia and

¹⁹ D. Noonan, *Those We Forget: Recounting Australian Casualties of the First World War*, (Carlton, 2014), pp.145-6

²⁰ The list is not publicly available but can be accessed by contacting the Reference Section of the National Archives of Australia on ref@naa.gov.au

²¹ P. Scarlett, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Volunteers for the A.I.F.*

simply disappeared. Silent heroes who did not want to draw attention to themselves by marching on Anzac Day. This meant that 'when people watched the battalions marched past they did not see any black faces.' This, Oakley believes, skewed people's perceptions about the role of Aborigines in the services and that it is only in the last five to ten years that this situation has changed.²²

Getting past the recruiting sergeant:

In 1910, prior to the introduction of the cadet scheme, a number of changes were made to the Defence Act. Part IV, 'Liability to Serve in the Citizen Force in Time of War', which included certain exemptions that could be made if necessary. Section 61 (h) stated that 'persons who are not substantially of European origin or descent, of which the medical authorities appointed under the Regulations shall be the judges,' were to be exempt from service.²³ While no particular group or race was mentioned specifically in Section 61 (h) of the Defence Act, several historians, among them Joan Beaumont, David Huggonson and Rod Pratt, believe that this piece of legislation was aimed primarily at Australia's Aboriginal community as part of the White Australia policy, and as such formed part of an attempt to restrict recruitment to settler Australians of Anglo-Celtic descent.²⁴ A white man's army for a white country!

According to Hugh Smith, in a paper delivered to celebrate the centenary of the Australian Army, citizenship and military service are closely linked, in that to fight for one's country is a duty of the citizen and sits alongside the rights he enjoys as such. Armies, in his opinion, are national and as such usually 'exclude those who do not belong to the nation and its shared values': in this case that included the Australian Aborigines, who were formally not citizens.²⁵ With the composition of the nation's Force a matter of public concern, as argued by Smith, it also needed to reflect public

²² H. Flynn, *The Great War: 10 Contested Questions*, p.194

²³ The Defence Act 1903-1914, p.17

²⁴ J. Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the First World War* (Crows Nest, 2013); R. Pratt 'Queensland's Aborigines in the First A.I.F.' *Sabretache* Volume XXXI, No. 1, January/March 1990, pp.18-22; R. Pratt, *Queensland's Aborigines in the First A.I.F.* *Sabretache* Volume XXXI No. 2, April/June 1990, pp 16-19; D. Huggonson, 'The White Australia Ideal and Australia's Defence Policy' *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, Volume 17, No. 8 November 2000, pp373-379; D. Huggonson, 'Dark Diggers of the AIF' *The Australian Quarterly*, Spring 1989, pp.352-357

²⁵ H. Smith 'Minorities and the Australian Army: Overlooked and underrepresented?' in Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey eds, *A Centenary of Service: 100 Years of the Australian Army*, proceedings of the 2001 Chief of Army's Military History Conference, Army History Unit (Canberra, 2001) online version

attitudes, and at the outbreak of the First World War Australian Aborigines were not considered citizens.²⁶

While Aborigines were exempt under the Defence Act, the Act does not state that they were prohibited from volunteering to serve. This raises the issue as to whether this clause was in direct contradiction to the Australian Constitution Act or not? Part V Section XXVI declares that:

The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution have the power to make peace, order and good government with respect to:- (XXVI) the people of any race, other than the Aboriginal race in each State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws.²⁷

Rod Pratt argues that the 'Commonwealth lacked the authority to pass any laws concerning the Aboriginal population', having devolved such powers to the states.²⁸ While the Defence Act does not mention Aborigines or any other non-European groups within Australian society, the assumption has been made that it was targeted at Aborigines first and foremost, and then Asians and Pacific Islanders. Whatever the official intent, the military authorities in most instances believed that it was aimed at excluding Aborigines.

This assertion is further supported by the issuing of 'Instructions for Enlisting and Recruiting Officers, dated December 1916 in which it is stated that:

Half-castes may be enlisted when, in the opinion of the District Commandant, they are suitable. Half-castes are usually of two classes - those who have mixed all their lives with white people and copied their ways, and those who have lived with their full-blood brothers; the former class might be suitable for enlistment, but the latter is not eligible, and is not to be enlisted.²⁹

While the Defence Act of 1903 clearly stated that unless a prospective recruit was of substantial European origin or descent then they were not to be enlisted, the instructions provided for Enlisting and Recruiting Officers at the end of 1916 would suggest that this was very much a grey area, where some latitude or discretion could be exercised on the part of the medical officers who were supposed to be the final

²⁶ Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911 – Part VIII Non-European Races, p.905. Chinese Australians also volunteered, often with similar results to the Australian Aborigines in that some were accepted while others were rejected for the same reasons. See A.Kennedy, 'Outwitting Bill Hughes and the White Australia Policy' in *Sabretache* December 2012

²⁷ Australian Constitution Act 1898 Commonwealth of Australia, Part V (XXVI)

²⁸ R. Pratt 'Queensland's Aborigines in the First AIF' *Sabretache* Vol XXXI, January/March 1990, p.21

²⁹ www.aph.gov.au (accessed 23/8/2014)

arbiters, and also by the recruiting officers themselves. Just how these officers were supposed to determine who had spent all their lives among white people, and who had not is not clear.

The exclusion of those men not of substantial European origin or descent demonstrates that there was a deliberate intent to exclude Aborigines from the Australian Imperial Force, because it was widely believed that there was no place for them in a predominantly white man's army. This is borne out in the rider that follows on from the Instructions issued in December 1916 –

As a guide in this matter it is to be borne in mind that these men will be required to live with white men and share their accommodation, and their selection is to be judged from this standpoint and whether their inclusion will cause irritation to the men with whom they will serve. The final decision as to the acceptance of these men is to be left to the discretion of the District Commandant.³⁰

Whether this was also the Commonwealth's official view is again not entirely clear. Pratt believes that there 'remains little doubt that the military authorities felt that Aborigines were both unwelcome and unwanted as servicemen.'³¹The case of a young man of mixed heritage (white and Afghan) who was denied access to Duntroon Military College in 1913 highlights attitudes current at the time. Commandant Bridges told the Secretary of Defence that 'as a matter of policy, only persons of pure European descent should be admitted as cadets and if the regulations ... do not secure this, then it should be amended without delay'.³² Despite advice from the Crown Solicitor that there were no legal grounds for excluding the boy, Bridges and others were determined that the Australian defence force would be strongly Anglo-Celtic in its ethnic composition, in line with the country's racially exclusive White Australia policy. Yet, it would appear that attitudes such as those espoused by Bridges and others were ignored and at times even absent at the local level as men of Aboriginal heritage came forward to volunteer for service, resulting in some being accepted, while others were turned away.

Early on in the enlistment process was a medical examination which all volunteers needed to undertake in order to progress through the enlistment process. They needed the medical officer to pass them as being physically fit to serve. In 1914 the

³⁰ www.aph.gov.au (accessed 23/8/2014)

³¹ R. Pratt 'Queensland's Aborigines in the First AIF' p.21

³² R. Pratt 'Queensland's Aborigines in the First AIF' p.21

standards were set as the same as those which applied to the Citizen Forces, i.e. a minimum height of 5 ft. 6 inch with a chest measurement of 34 inches and between the ages of 19 and 38 years. There was some provision made for older senior officers, warrant officers and Non Commissioned Officers. These would later be relaxed as the numbers volunteering dropped. At the end of 1915 Medical Boards were established usually made up of several medical officers to ensure some consistency that may have been missing previously. Still just over 30 per cent of potential recruits were rejected. Through Noonan's reworking of the statistics, he suggests that around 60 per cent of men who volunteered and were later discharged prior to embarkation would be turned away on medical grounds due to unspecified defects or deformities or medical conditions that many may not have been aware of at the time.³³ Others would fail to secure parental permission if underage, desert or were simply too late, hostilities having ceased prior to embarking for overseas. Unfortunately Noonan has not examined in more detail those men who were deemed to have not been of sufficient European origin as part of his analysis.

Using a small, but random sample of Attestation Papers of men who were of Australian Aboriginal descent, it was found that around 12 per cent were discharged and their papers marked with 'having been irregularly enlisted' due to the fact that they were considered 'not to be of substantial European origin.' Interestingly such a notation does not appear on the papers belonging to the indigenous Tasmanians. A further 11 per cent were discharged for a variety of reasons including 'being medically unfit' and 'not likely to become an efficient soldier', causes that might disguise wider racial prejudice but in a less obvious way and certainly not so blatantly as those mentioned earlier, bringing the total number of men discharged prior to embarkation to 23 per cent. (Table 1, p128) In a number of cases, the men had undergone preliminary training and it wasn't until they were given leave, or even returned from their final leave prior to embarkation for overseas, that they were told that they were being discharged. With no mechanism to challenge the decision, these men along with their settler Australian counterparts either had to accept the fact that they would not be able to serve or try again at another recruiting depot in the hope of being accepted by a different recruiting sergeant. A number of these men travelled long distances to

³³ D. Noonan, *Those We Forget* p.58

enlist in another capital city or as in a small number of cases travelled to Britain and enlisted there.

While none of the Tasmanian Indigenous who volunteered had their papers marked as being irregularly enlisted or not of substantial European origin, 16.2 per cent of them were nonetheless discharged for a variety of reasons. None appear to have any racial undertones as those whose papers were marked as being irregularly enlisted. Being medically unfit was found to be the predominant factor usually due to a previous medical condition. Arthur Vincent volunteered in July 1916 but on examination was found to have no upper teeth and flat feet.³⁴ Horace Robinson also had flat feet and was therefore rejected.³⁵ Dr Herbert Brownell, medical officer with front line experience, refused to pass Herbert Medcraft as fit for service on the grounds that he felt he was 'mentally unfit' having attempted to enlist earlier.³⁶ Such rejection must have caused these men considerable embarrassment at the very least, having been farewelled by their communities in many cases. Two men who may have not been embarrassed were those who decided that they had made a mistake in enlisting and had deserted. According to the Statement of Service for Lionel Garnet Cox, he enlisted at the end of November 1916, but within a couple of weeks had been struck off strength at Royal Park as a deserter following a Court of Inquiry. His brother may have also come to the decision that he too was not suited to the army and rather than desert committed a number of disciplinary offences in the hope of being discharged. His Statement of Service lists a number of offences committed by Cox between August and October 1915 resulting in him being discharged as 'an habitual bad character' and his services no longer required.³⁷

In May 1917, in the face of mounting losses on the Western Front and a reduction in recruits, the authorities were forced to act in order to boost numbers and decided one way to do this was to lift the restrictions on 'half-caste' Aborigines enlisting. It must have been clear by this time that many recruiting and medical officers were letting through men who they deemed to be 'white enough' based on their skin colouring.³⁸ The promulgation of Military Order 200 of May 1917 allowed for the enlistment of

³⁴ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #T1373 Arthur Wesley Vincent

³⁵ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #T3403 Horace Frederick Robinson

³⁶ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #T8146 Herbert William Medcraft

³⁷ NAA B2455/2 Personnel Dossier # 6971 Lionel Garnet Cox; Depot Douglas Lancell Keith Cox

³⁸ J. Moreman, 'Indigenous Australians at War' *Teaching History* Volume 36 No. 4 December 2002, p.6

'half-castes', provided that the examining Medical Officer was satisfied that one of the parents was of European origin.³⁹ How this was determined, or what criteria was used at a time when there was no necessity to produce any documentation to prove age or parentage, is unclear though. A medical officer only needed to satisfy himself that the person could see the prescribed distance with either eye, had a healthy heart and lungs, had full use of his joints and limbs, and was free from disease. It was then up to the recruiting sergeant to cull out the so called 'racially impure' and to impose Section 61 (h) of the Defence Act.

With the vast majority of the indigenous Tasmanians having enlisted in 1915 and 1916, this left only seven who volunteered after May 1917. The figure Australia wide is around 60 per cent enlisting prior to 1 May 1917. If the memoirs of John William Bleakley, Chief Protector of Aborigines for Queensland between 1914 and 1942, are to be believed, then large numbers of men immediately volunteered, all claiming to be 'half-castes' despite being the blackest 'half-castes' he had ever seen.⁴⁰ As suggested by John Moreman, some men were considered to be 'white enough' to pass through and whether their colouring was ever questioned is not known.⁴¹ This may well have been the case for many of the descendants of Dalrymple Johnson who, in a majority of instances were described as being of a medium or fresh complexion and with varying eye colour. All four Kennedy brothers were described as being of a fair complexion, with blue or grey eyes, and varying shades of brown hair. In contrast Marcus Brown who enlisted with a group of seven men from Cape Barren Island was described as being of a 'very dark' complexion with brown eyes and brown hair.⁴² Similarly, Thomas Mansell was described as being of a dark complexion, brown eyes and black hair.⁴³ A similar description could have been applied to any of the 'Straights' with the exception of the William Mansell and Edward Maynard who were both described as having a dark complexion, black or dark hair and blue eyes.⁴⁴

It is likely that some Australian Aborigines might well have utilised a similar strategy to Jack Dunn in April 1916, when he claimed exotic parentage, telling the recruiting officer that he was an American Negro. Others claimed to be Italian or some other

³⁹ AIF Military Regulations Circular No. 113, 1917

⁴⁰ J. Bleakley, *The Aborigines of Australia* (Brisbane, 1961), p.170

⁴¹ J. Moreman, 'Indigenous Australians at War' p.6

⁴² NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #2291 Marcus Blake Norman Brown

⁴³ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #5151 Thomas Edward Mansell

⁴⁴ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #3356 William Henry Mansell; #2294 Edward Stafford Lewis Maynard

mixed heritage to explain their dark complexion.⁴⁵ This does not seem to have applied to the Tasmanian Aborigines, with none being discharged for not being of substantial European origin. It is possible that the recruiting officers operating in Tasmania believed that the Tasmanian Aborigines as a race had died out, and thus the question of indigenous origins was deemed irrelevant. If they were, in fact, Aborigines, then they would only be 'half-castes', and could therefore be considered to be of the required level of European descent.

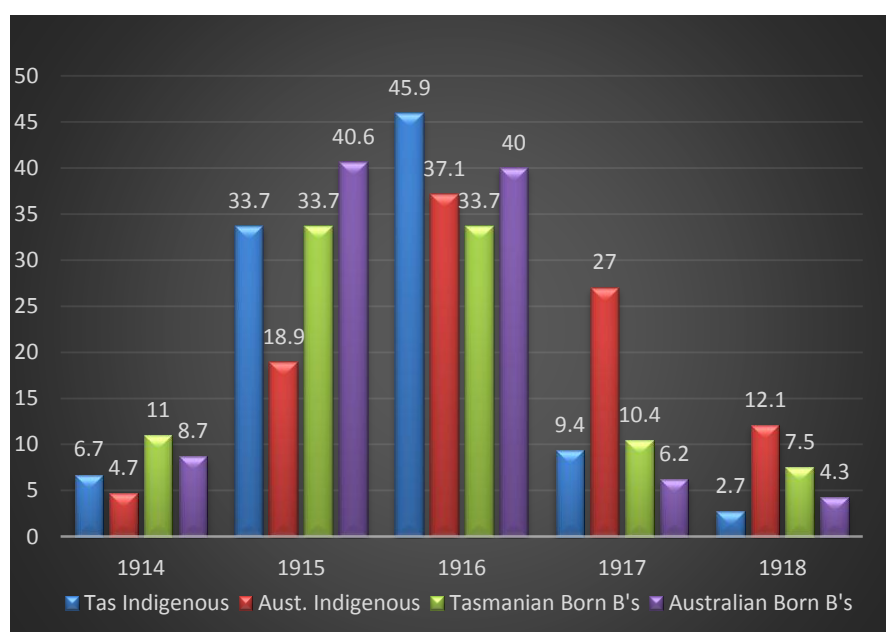


Figure 4: Total enlistments by year for each of the four cohorts based on percentage

Enlistment Year	Tasmanian Indigenous	Australian Indigenous	Tasmanian Born B's	Australian Born B's
1914	5 (6.7%)	7 (4.7%)	19 (11.0%)	14 (8.7%)
1915	25 (33.7%)	28 (18.9%)	58 (33.7%)	65 (40.6%)
1916	35 (47.2%)	55 (37.1%)	58 (33.7%)	64 (40.0%)
1917	7 (9.4%)	40 (27.0%)	18 (10.4%)	10 (6.2%)
1918	2 (2.7%)	18 (12.1%)	13 (7.5%)	7 (4.3%)

Indeed, far from there being evidence that Aboriginal Tasmanians were dissuaded from enlisting, they signed up in disproportionate numbers, particularly during 1915

⁴⁵D. Huggonson, 'Dark Diggers of the AIF', p.376

and 1916, and especially when compared to Australian Aborigines who seemed to have largely waited until after the promulgating of the acceptance of 'half castes' in 1917. This certainly applies to the Straitsmen who as seen in Figure 5 do not start enlisting until May 1915. Using the data provided by the Commonwealth Census of April 1911, which gives the total Tasmanian 'half caste' male population as being 123 individuals, this would suggest that 83.75 per cent of the Aboriginal Tasmanian male population volunteered for enlistment.⁴⁶ This, however, would seem to present a distorted picture.

If as I suggest in the Chapter 2: *A Dying Race*, the Aboriginal Tasmanian male population for all ages was in fact around 272, then the proportion of Aboriginal Tasmanians who enlisted across the state would be around 24.6 per cent. This compares favourably with the figures compiled by Dr A. G. Butler for his history of the Australian medical services during the First World War, in which he calculated that 7.9 per cent of the Tasmanian population volunteered for enlistment. Among the Tasmanian male population aged between 18 and 44 years, the figure jumps to 37.8 per cent.⁴⁷ Without accurate population figures which included both mainland Tasmanian and Furneaux Islanders and a breakdown across the age ranges, it is very difficult to establish an accurate rate of enlistment among the eligible indigenous Tasmanians. Regardless, Tasmanian Aborigines answered the call for men to enlist at a rate that is much greater than that of the Tasmanian population as a whole.

As can be seen from the graph of enlistments by month (Fig. 5), the majority of the Tasmanian Aborigines enlisted during the years 1915 and 1916 prior to any changes being made to the policy of excluding men 'who were not of substantial European origin'. This is in contrast to the Australian Aborigines, who despite the relatively small sample used, were overwhelmingly enlisting from 1916 onwards when compared to the Tasmanian and Australian Born 'B' cohorts. After the peak in 1916, the number of indigenous Tasmanian men volunteering in 1917 and 1918 dwindled considerably, while at the same time the overall number of Australian Aborigines was increasing dramatically in comparison. By 1918 people generally had become 'war

⁴⁶ This figure does not include the four men from Kangaroo Island, the Cox brothers who were living in Melbourne when they enlisted or Vernon Phillip Johnson who was now married and living in Sydney. The number of Aboriginal males in Tasmania at the time of the First World War was around 272. Just how many were of eligible age for service is not known.

⁴⁷ A.G. Butler, *Official History of the Australian Medical Services 1914-1918, Volume III Problems and Services*, (Melbourne, 1930) p.890

weary': yet interestingly, the biggest group to enlist in the last year of the war were the Australian Aborigines.

While there are some similarities between the patterns of enlistment compiled by Ernest Scott and those for the indigenous Tasmanians, they are much harder to discern with a smaller sample. It is possible that 'war fever' gripped Alfred Hearps, John Miller and Cyril Johnson, who had all had previous military experience and felt some kind of compulsion to enlist.⁴⁸ But there is no equivalent dramatic response to the news of the landing at Gallipoli in April 1915 as was seen on a national level, when there was a dramatic increase in the numbers enlisting in May 1915.⁴⁹ In the second half of 1915 there is an increase in enlistments, which may in part be as a result of the first major recruitment campaign. In 1916 the thought that men might be conscripted and forced to enlist seems to have caused an upswing in enlistments, even among the Aborigines. The remaining seven Tasmanian Aboriginal enlistments during 1917 are spread out over the year and do not seem to fit any pattern or corresponding events, with just two enlistments in 1918.

In 1914, much had changed on Cape Barren Island following the passing of the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act two years earlier, which was 'designed to control the lives of the Bass Strait Islanders' and provide a codified response to the perceived growing 'half caste' problem.⁵⁰ The population living within the 'Reserve area' was around 160 individuals.⁵¹ At least a further 14 'half-castes' were living on 'private property in the vicinity' of the Reserve.⁵² In addition to the 'half-caste' population was a small group of settler Australians, some of whom were in official positions, such as Francis Archer, the local constable and Captain James Bladon, the schoolmaster, along with at least three families who were involved in farming on the island.⁵³

In March 1911 Constable Francis Archer compiled a roll of the 'half-castes' living on Cape Barren Island which included people's ages. From this, it is possible to calculate that there were about 40 eligible indigenous islander males (aged 18 to 44) at the

⁴⁸ Colonel K. H. Jobson, 'First AIF Enlistment Patterns and Reasons for Their Variation' *Australian Defence Force Journal* No. 132, September/October 1998, p.61

⁴⁹ J. Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Crow's Nest, 2013), p.558

⁵⁰ C. Evans and N. Parry 'Vessels of Progressivism: Tasmanian State Girls and Eugenics, 1900-1940' *Australian Historical Studies* 32, No. 117 (2001), p.323

⁵¹ Figure given by Captain J. M. Bladon in letter dated 4 September 1911,TAHO PD1/237 pp.185-186

⁵²TAHO PD1/108/7/11 pp.149-158

⁵³ Including Barrett, Riddle and Davey families who were all farmers

outbreak of hostilities in August 1914.⁵⁴ When the figures were compiled at the request of the Tasmanian government, there were 44 males under the age of 21, and 41 over the age of 21 years. In addition, there were the wives and families of William Richard Brown, George Burgess and John Summers, a further 11 individuals. Of the 40 eligible men 18 would volunteer giving an enlistment rate of 45 per cent. Not all were successful, with William Brown being rejected for making a false statement about his age.

From the same source, it was possible to determine that a further 51 indigenous Tasmanians were living on nearby Flinders Island; but again Constable Archer has omitted at least two family groupings. Among this group around 16 men would have been of eligible age for enlistment had they volunteered and been accepted. Once more, the indigenous islanders enlisted in numbers well above that of the Tasmanian population as a whole. Ten indigenous men came forward to volunteer, giving an enlistment rate of 62.5 per cent.

‘going to the dardinells tonight don’t worry goodbye Mother’

Tasmania’s response to the war may not have been as energetic or enthusiastic as that of the mainland. To quote Les Carlyon ‘not all tripped to war much the same way: carefree, as full of dreams as a debutante going to a ball. She didn’t know what was going to happen, but it was better than sitting home, and when the ball was over she would be a bigger person that she had been before.’⁵⁵ The embarrassment of riches being experienced in Melbourne and Sydney did not translate to Hobart, which caused some alarm among the military authorities. Marilyn Lake believes that this was not because of any apathy on the part of Tasmanians, but ‘due to the high medical standards imposed’.⁵⁶ By 22 August, over two thousand men had volunteered, but only seven hundred (thirty five per cent) had been passed fit, with dental decay being a common cause for rejection. Despite this, Tasmania was able to meet its quota of 1070 by the end of September. It would seem then that there was no shortage of volunteers.

⁵⁴ Upon closer inspection of the roll it appears that at least three families were not included – John Fisher and his two sons as well as James Mansell and his family

⁵⁵ L. Carlyon, *Gallipoli* (Sydney, 2001) p.105

⁵⁶ M. Lake, *A Divided Society*, p.8

According to Bill Gammage 'there were ... a thousand particular and personal reasons for enlistment' in the first Australian Imperial Force some not discernible at this distance though. Among those he has suggested are 'loneliness, family trouble, public opinion and unemployment each contributed a measure' along with patriotism, obligation, a sense of adventure, revenge, better rate of pay, loyalty and defence of the Empire, and a free trip home.⁵⁷ Whatever the motivating factor or factors might have been, the men who volunteered early in the piece went willingly. Others would be more measured in their response to the call to arms, waiting to see if the war would in fact be over by Christmas before offering their services or needing to settle their business or personal affairs before fronting the recruiting depot.

Richard White and Alistair Thomson have argued that there were other 'more private or self-interested motives', and have also suggested that few working class men would have been stirred into enlisting by ideals of patriotism and loyalty to the country. Patriotic duty might have been an underlying motive for some, with it being a part of school life on a daily basis, but for many working class men it was less of a factor than a chance to escape a life of low and intermittent wages as a labourer, large and sometimes single parent families, poor or inadequate housing or a job with a very little or no future. Patriotism or even loyalty to Australia and to the Empire is not enough to explain why by the close of 1914, over fifty two and a half thousand men had been enlisted out of roughly eighty thousand men who had come forward to offer their services.⁵⁸ With stringent height, chest and age requirements, many as in the Tasmanian example of 1914, were rejected or forced to try again later. The '1914 men' were clearly the best that the country could send. Other factors need to be taken into account also.

Family responses given to Alick Jackomos and Derek Fowell for their book on Victorian Aborigines who served in the armed Force were very similar, if not the same, as those which were provided by settler Australians to Alistair Thomson or Nicholas Dawes and Lloyd Robson.⁵⁹ Responses not covered by Thomson *et al* related to escaping from the river bank or the mission station and a chance to prove that they were equal to the next soldier in the first Australian Imperial Force - situations that settler Australian

⁵⁷ B. Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p.11

⁵⁸ T. C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War*, p.9

⁵⁹ A. Jackomos and D. Fowell *Forgotten Heroes: Aborigines at War from the Somme to Vietnam*, p.10

soldiers did not usually find themselves in. Non-settler or coloured soldiers were the only ones who felt that they needed a chance to prove themselves equal to their white counterparts, a common response by other indigenous groups worldwide who were also seeking equality, not just the Australian Aborigines, according to Canadian historian Timothy Winegard.⁶⁰

During the period 1914-1918 and since, men have struggled to elucidate the reason or reasons for their willingness to enlist even to each other, let alone their families or to the public at large. In an era with no talk back radio, television, microphone toting journalists or the many other forms of information gathering and dissemination that we currently enjoy, it is hard to know just what motivated each man to volunteer for enlistment. Diaries tended to be commenced only after enlistment, and were often written with the expectation that someday another person or family member would read them, particularly if the author were to be killed in action. Hence certain topics such as fear, anger and regret were taboo, and were replaced often by amusing anecdotes or tales of places visited and people seen along the way. A similar form of self-censoring was also used in correspondence in order to minimise parental anxiety, and with an eye to avoiding the pen of the censors.⁶¹ The letters of Hearps' commanding officer, Lt Colonel Charles Elliott to his siblings make an excellent example of this. His letters to his sister are more about people whom he was seen or places he has been to and little about the war at all. To his brother he writes about the war only occasionally and again on a superficial level, preferring to write more about family issues, finances and people he has heard from.

Yet few letters, cards or other correspondence from among Australian Aborigines have survived to provide some idea of their motives for enlistment. While it is generally accepted that Aborigines had a very strong oral culture, since the 1830s and 1840s Tasmanian Aborigines had been putting pen to paper generating a range of writings including letters to government authorities and a lengthy petition to Queen Victoria.⁶² To date, only a small number of post cards or letters have been located. These include one written by Thomas Mansell whilst at Claremont Army Camp to his sister Winnie in early 1916: another by Claude Brown to his 'Uncle Summers', undated but possibly written during 1917 whilst in camp in England (before being returned home due to

⁶⁰ T. C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War*

⁶¹ J. Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the First World War*, pp.20-22

⁶² P. van Toorn, *Writing Never Arrives Naked* (Canberra, 2006), pp.2-3

deafness): and one from William Maynard to his sister May from his camp at Larkhill, England written in March 1917.⁶³ None of these give any motives for enlistment at all. Mansell was letting his sister know that he would soon be leaving Tasmania for overseas, while Brown merely wanted to let his uncle know that he was well.⁶⁴

Bill Gammage, in his ground breaking account of the First World War '*The Broken Years*' compiled using the letters and diaries of the men themselves, concluded that men who belonged to the clerical or professional classes were more likely to have kept a diary or been letter writers.⁶⁵ The least likely were sailors or those involved in seafaring of some kind. Less likely still were Aboriginal men, if the lack of surviving letters is anything to go by.⁶⁶ Literacy rates in 1911 among 'half-castes' stood at about 63.6 per cent, leaving many who could neither read nor write, or who could read only.⁶⁷ Of the 8,480 'half-caste' Aborigines included in the 1911 Census over 3,000 stated that they could not read.⁶⁸ This figure, though, is not fully representative of all Aborigines, with Tasmanian 'half-castes' experiencing a literacy level at 71.80 per cent: several percentage points higher than the national rate, but still well below settler Australians with 81.93 per cent of this population stating that they could read and write.⁶⁹

A person's ability to sign their name is just one of a range of indicators of a person's literacy skills.⁷⁰ The military seemingly were not overly concerned as to whether a potential soldier was literate or not on enlistment. This only became an issue later when promotion was in question. Using the signature or lack thereof as an indicator, it has been possible to establish a basic literacy rate for the four cohorts. Interestingly, all of the men in the two 'B' groups were able to sign their name, providing some

⁶³ Postcards from Claude Brown and Thomas Mansell from a private collection; Postcard from William Maynard held at Flinders Island Museum FHRA:1996 D:78; another written by James Henry Maynard may be in the hands of his family

⁶⁴ It should be noted that this also applied to settler Australian soldiers

⁶⁵ B. Gammage, *The Broken Years* p.287

⁶⁶ This is still an area of further research as more letters come to light from various collections and from families willing to share these precious memories – see www.indigenousohistories.com (accessed 8 March 2014)

⁶⁷ G. H. Knibbs, Commonwealth Census of Australia 1911 Table 2, Volume 11, Part IV Education

⁶⁸ G. H. Knibbs, Commonwealth Census of Australia 1911, Volume 1 Statistician's Report, p.230

⁶⁹ Census of the Commonwealth of Australia 1911, Volume II Part VIII Non-European Races, Table 57 pp.968-9; Commonwealth of Australia 1911, Volume II, Part IV, p.443

⁷⁰ The use of a person's ability to sign their name is just one indicator of functional literacy. Literacy can be divided into four groups – 1) illiterate in that the person can not read or write; 2) can read a little; 3) can write a little and 4) can read and write well

evidence of a level of functional literacy. Among the Australian Aboriginal cohort, at least fifteen men were unable to sign their name on the attestation form, instead using a cross which was then witnessed.⁷¹ Just three indigenous Tasmanians in this study were unable to sign their name – Frederick Brown from Cape Barren Island, Edward Maynard from Flinders Island, and William Stanton from Nicholls Rivulet in the south of the state.⁷²

Aborigines, whether living on mainland Australia or on the Bass Strait islands off Tasmania, were keen to enlist and be part of the big adventure that was on offer. This then begs the question as to why these men would volunteer to fight for a country that had policies in place that not only marginalised them but in many cases denied them recognition as full citizens for generations to come. Moreman, Huggonson, Pratt and others believe that while there may have been many personal reasons why Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders volunteered, there is very little difference between the basic motives of the two groups – settler Australians and Aborigines. Ideas of patriotism are less likely to have been strong motivating factors among Aboriginal Australians, although it has been suggested Aborigines may have seen themselves as fighting for their homeland, as they were the original Australians after all.⁷³ A sense of loyalty should not be discounted totally however, considering that it was an important part of daily life in most, if not all schools, where students were required to salute the flag and sing God Save the King each morning: Empire Day figured strongly in the years before the First World War, both in schools and elsewhere.

For some individuals the chance to escape from living on the fringes of society must have also been an attractive proposition, including escaping grinding poverty in some of the poorest suburbs in Melbourne or Sydney. In 1908, Lake Tyers Aboriginal Mission was taken over by the Victorian government and the residents placed under the control of the Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines, with a manager to

⁷¹ Out of this group, at least nine were discharged prior to embarkation.

⁷² A letter dated 10 March 1916 and written by W. H. Ferguson confirms the fact Edward Maynard was illiterate, stating 'Private Maynard could not write'. NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #2294 Edward Lewis Maynard

⁷³ J. Moreman, 'Indigenous Australians at War', p.6; R. Pratt 'Queensland's Aborigines in the First AIF' *Sabretache* Vol XXXI; D. Huggonson, 'Dark Diggers of the AIF' *The Australian Quarterly*, Spring 1989 and D. Huggonson, 'The White Australian Ideal and Australia's Defence Policy' *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* Volume 17 No. 8 November 2000

oversee the Mission's day to day running. For the next 50 years, the Board operated the Reserve on the assumption that the Aborigines living there were a dying race, and that it was their task to 'smooth their dying pillow'.⁷⁴ Yet despite the way they were being treated, nine men from the Reserve served in the first Australian Imperial Force, including Henry Thorpe, who was awarded the Military Medal, and William Fred Murray who was killed in action.⁷⁵ It is likely that some, if not all, were encouraged to enlist either by family or friends or by those in charge.

A similar situation may well have taken place on Cape Barren Island following the passing of the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act of 1912 with Captain James Bladon, the schoolmaster, too old to enlist himself, but still actively encouraging the young men from the reserve to leave the island and volunteer. Despite the intervening years in which Claude Brown had plenty of time to fashion a motivation for enlistment that fitted well at a time when the country was at war again and would have impressed the politician he was writing to, his letter still gives an insight into what motivated him at the time of his enlistment – a sense of duty. Notions of duty would have been inculcated into the local children through the local school and reinforced later when Bladon took over at the beginning of 1911.⁷⁶

Certainly, some individuals hoped that by enlisting and serving overseas they could secure a better life for themselves on being discharged, and that they would be able to claim citizenship rights along with the other benefits given to settler Australian soldiers, such as access to pensions, soldier settlement blocks and war service home loans that would lift their standard of living.⁷⁷ Another explanation given by Winegard, is that Aborigines saw themselves as capable as any Europeans, and wanted to prove 'their worth as indigenous peoples both individually and collectively ... that they could participate on equal terms and win the respect of the dominant European society in order to gain the rights for their peoples', a chance to be seen as civilized and worthy of recognition as such, and to gain equality and autonomy for themselves.⁷⁸ The

⁷⁴ A. Jackomoss and D. Fowell, *Forgotten Heroes: Aborigines at War from the Somme to Vietnam*, p.13

⁷⁵ A. Jackomoss and D. Fowell, *Forgotten Heroes: Aborigines at War from the Somme to Vietnam* p.14

⁷⁶ NAA P107/39 C6190 Pension File Claude Eyre Brown, #6477 private 12th Battalion, letter dated 18 August 1941

⁷⁷ D. Huggonson, 'Dark Diggers of the AIF' *The Australian Quarterly*, Spring 1989, p.353-4

⁷⁸ T. C. Winegard *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War*, p.5

possibility of autonomy could have been something that would have resonated not just with the Straitsmen, who had sought to control their own lives when the Cape Barren Island Reserve Act was proposed in 1911, but also many other Aborigines who were living on missions and who had every aspect of their daily lives controlled by overseers.

What motivated Tasmanian Aborigine John William Miller, a 25 year old married labourer from Hobart, to join up is likely to be quite different from that of Ngarrindjeri man Hurtle Charles Muckray. Both men enlisted in 1914. Muckray was living at East Wellington in South Australia and working as a labourer. His mother Charlotte was a settler Australian married to George Muckray, one of a group of Raukkan residents who had moved off the mission in the 1890s and 1900s to farm small blocks of land near Wellington.⁷⁹ Unlike Miller, Muckray had no previous military experience, and may well have made a spur of the moment decision given the note that he left for his family when he left home to volunteer in late November 1914. In it he stated quite simply that he was 'going to the dardinnells [*sic*] tonight don't worry goodbye Mother, Hurtle.'⁸⁰ How he knew that is where he was going and that he would be fighting at the Dardanelles is unclear.

While history does not record what motivated Miller to volunteer, one possible explanation is that as a member of the militia serving with the 91st Regiment in Hobart, he saw it as his patriotic duty to volunteer, something that would have been instilled in him both at school and in the militia.⁸¹ As was the case with Jack Hearps, with so many others going, it would have been hard for Miller to have resisted the pressure that might have been placed on him by other members of the Regiment, who had already volunteered or were in the process of doing so. Not to volunteer would possibly have brought disgrace to the unit if not himself as well.⁸²

Miller and Muckray would be among a number of Aboriginal soldiers who fought on Gallipoli during 1915 that also included Jack Hearps and several others who managed to enlist early.⁸³ Among the men killed in action shortly after the landing at Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915, was Private John Miller. He had enlisted on October 1914, the day

⁷⁹ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #757 Hurtle Muckray

⁸⁰ D. Katrinyeri, *Ngarrindjeri Anzacs*, p.27

⁸¹ A similar scenario may have been played out as that recalled by Raymond Brownell.

⁸² R. J. Brownell, *From Khaki to Blue* (Lyneham, 1978) p.27

⁸³ The number of Aboriginal men who fought on Gallipoli is now around 50 according to information provided by Philippa Scarlett to the author in conversation

before the first contingent left Hobart. At five feet and four inches in height he barely met the minimum height requirements, but did have experience with the militia, which would have put him ahead of those with none. Today he lies buried in the cemetery at Baby 700.

Douglas Grant was another who volunteered in 1916 before the changes to the restrictions on enlistment.⁸⁴ On 2 September 1916 *The Sydney Morning Herald* ran an article about an Aboriginal soldier who had embarked for service overseas the previous week.⁸⁵ This was at a time when recruitments had dropped considerably and every able bodied person was being encouraged to enlist, even Australia's Aborigines. Grant had been given what would be considered by many a privileged upbringing, with every opportunity to pursue his interests in literature, art and music. Born in the Herberton Ranges in north Queensland around 1885, Grant was about twelve months old when his parents were killed in a punitive raid on a camp. He was rescued and later brought to Sydney by Mr and Mrs Robert Grant, where he was raised as a member of the family. On completing his education, he gained employment as a mechanical draftsman and later having qualified as a wool classer, moved to Scone in the upper Hunter region.⁸⁶ He was considered to be an intelligent, articulate and striking man, who spoke with a thickly burred Scottish accent. He was also a clever sketch artist and penman.⁸⁷

Just what the recruiting officers at Scone made of the dark skinned young man who was obviously of Aboriginal heritage but spoke with a soft Scottish burr will never be known, but it is assumed that somehow he managed to convince them to accept him. The fact that he could handle a rifle may have made some impression. There may well have been other explanations to account for his acceptance into the military at a time when men who were not of 'substantial European origin' were not supposed to have been enlisted. These could include the military wanting to shame settler Australians into enlisting, or were starting to soften their stance, and perhaps saw Douglas Grant

⁸⁴ William Joseph Punch was another example. He too had been raised by a settler Australian family following the murder of his own family. Punch enlisted in December 1915. He died of illness in August 1917. See G. Seal *Great Anzac Stories: the men and women who created the digger legend* (Sydney, 2013) pp.76-78

⁸⁵ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 September 1916, p.20. The same or similar article appeared in a number of other newspapers in the Sydney area including the *Western Champion* 7 September 1916, p.16

⁸⁶ J. Ramsland and C. Mooney, *Remembering Aboriginal Heroes*, pp.2-14:

⁸⁷ Lieutenant C. D. Clark, 'Aborigines in the First A.I.F.' *Army Journal* No. 286, March 1973, p.24

as a potential pin up boy for others to follow. Publicity shots of a very serious looking young man in uniform sporting the colour patches of the 13th Battalion were taken before his departure for the front in August 1916. Despite being quite an accomplished public speaker after the war, Douglas Grant's motives were never shared with others, and will therefore remain hidden from history.

For others, the six shillings a day wage had to be an attractive offer, given the poor rates of pay most Aborigines were forced to accept. The per diem pay was often more than most would earn in a week, particularly in the northern pastoral industry which employed large numbers of Aborigines, where even white station hands were not included in the Pastoral Award until 1917, and often worked more than 48 hours a week.⁸⁸ According to David Huggonson, young Aboriginal men who volunteered became 'highly-paid local heroes who enjoyed equality with white Australians, at least while overseas.'⁸⁹ The financial motivation was one that applied to many thousands of volunteers, not just Aborigines, as the country battled drought particularly in 1914 & 1915, rising unemployment and a rapid rise in the cost of food and rent.

Just over half of the indigenous Tasmanian men in this study gave their occupation on enlistment as that of labourer.⁹⁰ This is in line with mainland Aborigines as well. A labourer is usually someone engaged in work that is either unskilled or semi-skilled, doing manual work for a wage. Living on the remote islands in Bass Strait meant that many of the Straitsmen needed to be skilled in a wide range of activities in order to make a living. These not only included more traditional activities such as fishing and birding, but also included basic building and farming skills. A number would also have been skilled at tin mining as well. It was not until the families moved from the islands that they were able to secure long-term employment.

Several men including Julian Everett and Philip Johnson stated that they were farmers; but it is probable that this was just one form of employment that they were engaged in.⁹¹ While Johnson might well have been a farmer, it is likely that Everett, as a single man, was in fact working as a farm hand, possibly on nearby Flinders Island or on the island for one of the settler Australian landholders. When the men employed as farm labourers and seamen (sailor and mariners) are added together, over 86 per cent of

⁸⁸ D. Huggonson, 'Dark Diggers of the AIF', p.354

⁸⁹ D. Huggonson, 'The White Australian Ideal and Australia's Defence Policy', p.379

⁹⁰ 38 out of 74 or 51.35%

⁹¹ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #6271 Julian Clifford Everett and #2853 Philip Johnson

the Tasmanian Aboriginal soldiers were employed in some form of work that was seasonal by nature prior to volunteering for enlistment.

Frank Maynard was living on Flinders Island at the time of his enlistment, where some farm work would have been available along with fishing and mutton birding during the season.⁹² Cousins John and William Gower would have been able to pick up work either on one of the local farms around Latrobe, or possibly with the local council, or even the railways.⁹³ John Miller, who was residing in Hobart would have relied on different forms of work in order to provide for himself and his growing family – whether it was working on the roads, factory work or some form of seasonal or casual work.⁹⁴ To be paid a set amount on a regular basis, as well as having their equipment, clothing and daily rations provided would have been an attractive proposition for many labourers, whether Aboriginal or settler Australian. There is no available evidence to suggest that men such as the Gower cousins were paid at a lower rate by the army on account of their Aboriginality, as was the case with many Australian Aboriginal pastoral workers in the private agricultural industries, which would have provided a strong motivating factor to sign up.

If service to their country, the opportunity to travel overseas, an opportunity for adventure, and being paid a regular amount with food and clothing provided were among the many motivating factors that influenced Australian Aborigines to enlist, then it would seem that there was little difference between them and settler Australians. Escaping a life on a cattle station with poor pay and poor housing might have seemed far removed from the experience of some who lived in the poorer suburbs and took labouring jobs where they could be found, but it was only different in degrees.

An example of a settler Australian was Jack Flannery who was working as farm labourer. He was originally from Don, a farming community on the outskirts of Devonport in the north-west of Tasmania before moving to the mainland.⁹⁵ During his formative years the family travelled around the north west of Tasmania engaging in other seasonal work. It was not until after the Australians had landed at Gallipoli that Flannery, aged seventeen years, decided to go to war. Being underage he needed

⁹² NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #1153 Frank Maynard

⁹³ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #2838 John Donald Gower and # 14604 William Harold Gower

⁹⁴ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #1227 John William Miller

⁹⁵ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #7981 John Albert Flannery

to persuade his father to give his permission; if not, he was prepared to go to Melbourne to enlist anyway. In later life, Flannery told historian Alistair Thomson that his motive for enlisting was to 'see the world and have a good trip' but it is also quite likely that he too wanted a steady job with a regular pay.⁹⁶

The same could be said of those who enlisted in the hope of the adventure of a lifetime, the chance to see another part of the world that would normally have been denied to them. Travel for pleasure was usually only for the wealthy, particularly overseas travel. It is doubtful that with so many men casually employed, any of the indigenous Tasmanian men in this study would have been able to afford to travel for pleasure. Vernon Johnson was just one who had left Tasmania and moved to Leichardt in Sydney, where he was working as a machinist when he enlisted in April 1915.⁹⁷ It is also very doubtful whether many Aborigines saw England in terms of the 'mother country' and as a place where they had family connections. All the men in this study would have had connections back to England through their male convict/sealer ancestors: but unlike many other soldiers, any links had been well and truly severed. However, the possibility of travel to either the Middle East or Europe was not without some attraction to those who became soldiers.

Through the work of Dawson and Robson, it has been determined that a range of social pressures both positive and negative were used by recruiting officers, employers, families, church groups, and sporting groups, the 'push' or 'pull' factors to either encourage or discourage men from enlisting.⁹⁸ Sporting clubs in particular were targeted by recruiting officers as it was supposed that many of their members would be fit and healthy, and as time went on and the need for more volunteers grew, no opportunity for securing more recruits could be wasted.⁹⁹ Lieutenant Charles Littler, while waiting for deployment with the next group of reinforcements to depart, was employed by the Tasmanian military authorities as a recruiting officer travelling the state, including the Furneaux Group of Islands. It is likely that he met with Captain J. M. Bladon, schoolmaster on Cape Barren Island. As someone with a strong military background, it is quite possible that Littler was given a good hearing, and an agreement was made to encourage as many of the local young men to enlist as

⁹⁶ A. Thomson, *Anzac Memories; Living with the Legend* (South Melbourne, 1995), p.28

⁹⁷ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #2225 Vernon Phillip Johnson

⁹⁸ J.N.I. Dawes and L.L. Robson, *Citizen to Soldier*, pp.124-135

⁹⁹ M. McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, (Crow's Nest, 2010) pp.94-96

possible. It is unlikely that Captain Bladon needed any added encouragement from the likes of a recruiting officer in Lieutenant Charles Littler, as he was already known to be a supporter of the compulsory military training scheme which was introduced in 1911.

It is entirely plausible, given Bladon's background, that when war was declared he actively encouraged many of the Straitsmen living on Cape Barren Island to enlist, no doubt inculcating in them ideas about doing their patriotic duty.¹⁰⁰ According to Martin Crotty, military service in the early twentieth century equated with manliness, a notion that would have appealed to a number of the young Straitsmen on a cultural basis, as well as possibly appealing to their vanity.¹⁰¹ With the demise of the sealing and boat building industries, and with few other employment opportunities open to the young Straitsmen, Bladon may well have had a receptive audience among the young men who saw enlistment as a chance for regular employment, with a decent rate of pay, along with an opportunity to travel and to see more of the world.

Living on the remote islands of Bass Strait, many, if not most of the residents of Cape Barren Island at least were in some way related and also had relatives living on nearby Flinders Island. So it should come as no surprise that a number of the men from the Furneaux Group of Islands left home in groups – whether with brothers, cousins or friends - all in the hope of enlisting together and staying together for moral support. Bladon may also have tapped into this and further encouraged the men to go away in groups in order to provide some form of mutual support, or it might simply have been a natural thing for these men to do so, given their kinship values and that fact that most were related.¹⁰² Should one be killed or seriously wounded, then it would be the others' responsibility to inform the family and to give them as many details as possible. On 25 January 1916 Henry Brown, Sydney Burgess, Archie Mansell, George Mansell and Thomas Mansell presented themselves to the Claremont Army Camp for enlistment, having travelled from Cape Barren Island. The group were all mates as well as being related, and had somewhere along the way come to the decision that they

¹⁰⁰ A. T. Morgan, *Aboriginal Education in the Furneaux Islands 1798 – 1986*. (Hobart, 1986) p.141: Letter to Premier Lewis dated 23 January 1911, RS 40/1 Royal Society of Tasmania Archives.

¹⁰¹ M. Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle class masculinity 1870-1920* (Carlton South, 2001), p.90

¹⁰² Bladon was keen to lift the living standards of the Straitsmen beginning with the children - teaching them a range of agricultural skills but ideas did not succeed due to by a lack of water and shipping. Girls were taught a range of domestic skills along with the 3R's. Straitsmen also contributed generously to the war effort with items for the Red Cross including 100 strings of shells donated to the Air Craft Fund

would enlist, whether out of some shared sense of duty or just for moral support. Six months later a further group of seven Straitsmen left home and travelled to Hobart with the intention of volunteering for enlistment, hoping to be kept together as they too embarked on the big adventure.

Another possible motive for enlistment and an example of a different kind of social pressure is that applied through the cadets, the militia or volunteers. If they were still serving, as was the case with Jack Hearps and John Miller, then it would have been incumbent upon them to have volunteered. As already mentioned, 22.9 per cent of Tasmanian Aboriginal men stated that they had previous military experience. This figure is considerably lower than that for the Tasmanian 'B' Group at just over 34 per cent, but is much higher than that among Australian Aborigines at just a little over 12 per cent. It may well say something about the attitude of the Tasmanian Aborigines, how they saw themselves within their communities, and a certain need for acceptance as members.¹⁰³

Jack Hearps, for instance, seems to have been well-accepted into the local volunteers at Queenstown. John Miller belonged to the Derwent Regiment along with cousins Charles and William Miller and Albert Smith. 'A' Company and Headquarters of the 93rd Infantry met in Hobart while 'C' Company was located at Geeveston south of Hobart. If the story provided by Ray Brownell in his memoirs *From Khaki to Blue* is somewhere close to the mark, then it would seem that anyone who was already in the volunteers or militia, and who was of the right age bracket and fit enough to pass the early stringent medical examination, was being encouraged to enlist.¹⁰⁴ To have not volunteered without good reason would have been viewed very dimly by other members of the regiment. This in itself may have been sufficient motivation for John Miller, a married man, to volunteer, particularly when coupled with the thought of a regular pay of six shillings a day.

This would also suggest that not only were there very differing motivations for enlisting, but that there may have been differences between the states in the way Section 61 (h) was applied. Tasmania was possibly in quite a different situation from many mainland states, being the only state not to have enacted an Aborigines

¹⁰³ See Chapter 2, A Dying Race

¹⁰⁴ R. J. Brownell, *From Khaki to Blue*, p.2

Protection Act in some form.¹⁰⁵ There was no Chief Protector of Aborigines here in Tasmania who controlled where Tasmania's Aboriginal population lived, their occupations, their finances and myriad other aspects of their daily lives. The men living on mainland Tasmania, on Flinders Island or even on Cape Barren Island, but outside the reserve were not subject to any of the same laws that applied within the reserve on Cape Barren Island as discussed in Chapter 3: they were free to live and work where they pleased.

Albert (Albie) Linton who when interviewed by historian Alistair Thomson as part of his study of the Anzacs, stated that he was a nineteen year old storeman when he enlisted in July 1915.¹⁰⁶ He had grown up in the bush in Tasmania, but had later moved to Melbourne for factory work and football. Linton initially volunteered in August 1914, but was discharged, being underage. On the second occasion he enlisted with a number of others from his local football team at a time when sporting clubs and organisations were being targeted.¹⁰⁷ Not only would these men be in good physical condition and would easily pass the medical examination, but would know the value of loyalty, determination, unselfishness and the team spirit that sport taught its participants.¹⁰⁸ What that meant for Linton is unknown: but it was more than likely that sport for a young man from the western suburbs of Melbourne was an escape from the humdrum of his life as a factory worker and that his membership of the football team was an important part of his identity and social network.

For Flannery and Linton their motives for enlisting were tied up with regular employment and being with their mates but for another settler Australian in Frederick Self it was a sense of duty. Self was a 38 year old married fireman with four young children when he volunteered on 15 January 1918.¹⁰⁹ It is possible that he felt that he could no longer face his family and friends, and just had to take the step of volunteering.¹¹⁰ When he finally left Tasmania, Frederick Self did so with a heavy heart,

¹⁰⁵ Victoria – 1869 Aborigines Protection Act, Western Australia – 1886 Aborigines Protection Act; Queensland –Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act of 1897; New South Wales – Aborigines Protection Act 1909 and South Australia (inclusive of Northern Territory) – Northern Territories Aborigines Act of 1910

¹⁰⁶ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #728 Albert Charles Linton; see also chapter 'Muddled oafs' and flannelled fools': sport and war in Australia in M. McKernan, *The Australian People and the First World War*

¹⁰⁷ A. Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp.30-31

¹⁰⁸ M. McKernan, *The Australian People and the First World War*, p.95

¹⁰⁹ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier for #8065Frederick Self

¹¹⁰ Frederick Self was the last member of his family to enlist – NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier - #3589 Herbert John Self enlisted on 26 August 1915 and was wounded in action on 5 April

as is evident from a letter written to his daughter Thelma in April 1918 in which he apologises for leaving, writing 'if it ever comes my way again I will never leave you again.'¹¹¹ Many other married men claimed that they had families that they felt they could not leave for others to support. This was not an option for Frederick Self, organising for members of the Hobart Fire Brigade to step into the breach. It would appear that some sense of duty from which Self could not escape was driving him on, which would ultimately result in his death on the battlefield two weeks after he reached the front.

Frederick Self might well be put into that group of men whom Charles Bean considered to be the 'hard thinkers', men who 'had stood against temptation or urge to enlist but could no longer in conscience do so.'¹¹² It also seems that some simply needed more time to consider, or took more convincing, than others. This should not necessarily be construed as being unpatriotic. It was assumed by some sections of the community that women were being selfish in discouraging their men from enlisting. However, this does not seem to have been the case with Emily Self. Like the sportsmen, women were also targeted later by recruiting organisations to inform the men in their lives of their duty to Australia, and to persuade them to enlist.

Fred, Albie and Jack and other mentioned in this study all volunteered to enlist. Basically it was their choice to do so even if some pressure or pressures might have been applied (either external or internal), however, this, according to John Connor, was not always the case though. He sees this as one of the great myths associated with the Anzacs that the Australians were the 'only all-volunteer force in World War 1'¹¹³ Another myth associated with this is the misconception that those who volunteered made better soldiers than those who were compelled to join. This argument was used predominantly during the conscription debates. On the eve of the First World War Australian society was very Edwardian in many ways: particularly in business where young people often had decisions made for them by others such as their parents or employers. Dawes and Robson cite the case of a young man working as a junior clerk

1918; #1186 Robert James Self enlisted 26 April 1915 and sustained an accidental injury and #5677 Thomas Albert Self enlisted 25 March 1916 and was wounded in action on 4 October 1917 and again on 17 July 1918.

¹¹¹ Letter dated 18 April 1918 from Frederick Self to his daughter Thelma, copy held by Mrs Nola Webb, West Hobart.

¹¹² J.N.I. Dawes and L. L. Robson, *Citizen to Soldier*, p.188

¹¹³ J. Connor, 'The 'Superior' all-volunteer AIF,' in C. Stockings (ed) *12 Myths of Australian Military History*, (Sydney, 2012) p.42

in a law firm who was almost forced into enlisting, not for financial reasons, but because the older members of the firm believed that enlistment was the right thing for an eligible male to do regardless of what the young clerk himself may have thought.¹¹⁴ Just as the young clerk was encouraged to enlist, others were prevented from enlisting, with some employers making a choice as to who would stay behind and who could enlist and when. For example, a station manager in the north-east of South Australia allowed several of his stockmen to enlist, as their services were surplus to his requirements due to the drought. The same manager then begged another to stay as he was in charge of maintaining the dams, his work vital to the survival of the property. He was allowed to enlist in 1915 after heavy rains alleviated the need for his expertise.¹¹⁵

Yet many eligible men were caught up in complex relationships with 'other duties and commitments than to nation and Empire and mates'¹¹⁶ Frederick Self had three other brothers who were already in uniform and serving at the front line. Maybe with a wife and four children to consider, their support paramount, he or the family decided that for the time being at least, the Self family had given enough to the war effort. This was not an unusual response, and needs to be seen in light of the fact that in 1914, family responsibilities loomed large in a man's life, probably to a much greater extent than they do today given the limited welfare system that existed. A reading of some of the war gratuity files for those men who died in the war soon gives an indication of just how many women were heavily reliant on the money that their loved one, usually their sons, contributed toward their keep and that of any younger siblings.¹¹⁷

Jack Flannery and Albie Linton were among a group of World War 1 veterans who in their twilight years were interviewed in the early 1980s by Alistair Thomson, in an effort to capture the thoughts and ideas of the Anzacs before they all disappeared. Thomson believes that the memories that these men shared with him were influenced by popular conceptions of Anzacs. 'For each man the influence of new Anzac representations depended on his original experience of war, on the ways in which he had previously composed his war remembering, and on the social and emotional

¹¹⁴ J. N. I. Dawes and L. L. Robson, *Citizen to Soldier*, p.130

¹¹⁵ J. N. I. Dawes and L. L. Robson, *Citizen to Soldier*, pp.119-120

¹¹⁶ A. Forrest 'Milling Around Outside The Town Hall': Motivations for enlistment in the first AIF' *Melbourne Historical Journal*, Volume 18, 1987, p.104

¹¹⁷ NAA Series No. P1868, Application for War Gratuity

context of old age'.¹¹⁸ Certainly, when Nicholas Dawes and Lloyd Robson put out their appeal for soldiers of the First World War to record their memories, the Vietnam War was still being waged, and seems to have had some influence on the responses received.¹¹⁹ Both Flannery and Linton had many years to ponder on what had initially motivated them to enlist, and for those motives to be fashioned by the current representations of Anzac. The fact that only a very small percentage of returned soldiers have actually publicly articulated their motives for enlistment, whether on paper or as part of an oral history, reflects the difficulty many had in their struggle to compose memories of the war, enlistment being a big part of it.

Broadly speaking, Dawes and Robson found that nation, empire, money, adventure and family were constant themes running through many of the 200 or so replies they received. Richard White and Alistair Thomson have expressed 'problems' with these responses. White in particular has 'doubts about the reliability of accounts written half a century after the event, given that the war itself challenged men's ideas of why they were there.'¹²⁰ He also has doubts about the representativeness of the answers received in response to a newspaper advertisement when most men refused to, or were at least very reluctant to speak about their experiences, even to their own families. Richard White was left wondering if they were 'typical' responses, or if those who responded were just more forthcoming than most.

Yet these were similar themes to those which Charles Bean and Manning Clark had elicited years earlier. Bean's research for his history of the First Australian Imperial Force found that duty to Australia including the empire, rates of pay, the generous allotment and allowances, the chance to see something of the rest of the world, training as a 'real' soldier, and finally the possibility of taking the place of another who had been killed or taken prisoner and wreaking some kind of vengeance.¹²¹ These were not too dissimilar to those quoted by Manning Clark, elicited from men as they waited to enlist in Sydney on 11 August 1914, with one stating that he was 'itching to git a dig at a few Germans', and another apparently wanting to wipe out such an infamous nation, while others were attracted by the rates

¹¹⁸ A. Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, p.215

¹¹⁹ J.N.I. Dawes and L. L. Robson, *Citizen to Soldier*, p.x

¹²⁰ R. White, 'Motives for Joining Up: Self-sacrifice, self-interest and social class, 1914-1918' *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No. 9 1986, p.10; A. Thomson, *Anzac Memories*, pp.215-221

¹²¹ C.E.W. Bean, *The Story of Anzac* (Sydney, 1921), pp.43-4

of pay being offered, along with the allowances and allotment.¹²² Others were clearly concerned about their personal standing in the community, with one man stating that he was there because 'he would never be able to look any decent girl in the face again', and another because he 'would not be able to look men in the face again' if he did not enlist. Enlistment also provided an avenue of escape for others, whether from the law, or from an unhappy marital situation, as was the case with a man who was enlisting in order that he 'would not have to look at his wife in the face again for quite a while.'¹²³

While a person might go off to war singing or talking about high and lofty ideals of patriotism, duty and glory, they also might well be, as Richard White suggests, thinking about the six bob a day that they would receive, and embarking on the adventure of a lifetime across the seas on a world tour. Most, if not all, the motives examined could be grouped together under one of self-interest. While Jack Hearps and John Miller might have felt the need to conform to the group mentality and enlist alongside others in their militia, other motives might well have been in play at the same time, one of which may have had to do with securing a regular wage or ongoing employment. Supposing that Bladon encouraged men from Cape Barren Island with stories about being in the military or simply encouraged them to 'do their duty', it was still up to the individual to make the decision whether to stay or to go. It may well have been easier to make the decision to go than to have to justify on a daily basis not having gone.

For many working class men around Australia, the declaration of war was seen almost as a godsend with its regular pay packet, and 'all found' something that some men had not seen before in their lives. While there was a chance that they would not return, for many this was seen as an acceptable risk at a time when the death rate among 20 to 39 year olds was 15 per cent.¹²⁴ On the more positive side, it was a chance for them to do something different, even if it meant risking being killed or maimed in the process.

Nevertheless, it is striking that the descendants of those who resisted the British invasion of Tasmania in the first half of the nineteenth century disproportionately answered the call to arms in the First World War. They enlisted at a rate that was approximately three times greater than that for Tasmanian men who were not of

¹²² C.M.H. Clark, *A History of Australia Volume V: The People Make Laws 1888-1915* (Carlton 1987 (ed) p.381

¹²³ C.M.H. Clark, *A History of Australia Volume V* p.381

¹²⁴ R. White, 'Motives for Joining Up: Self-sacrifice, self-interest and social class, 1914-1918' *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* No. 9 1986, p.14

indigenous descent. Whether and to what extent this remarkable contribution was recognised and rewarded is explored in the more detail in the next chapter.

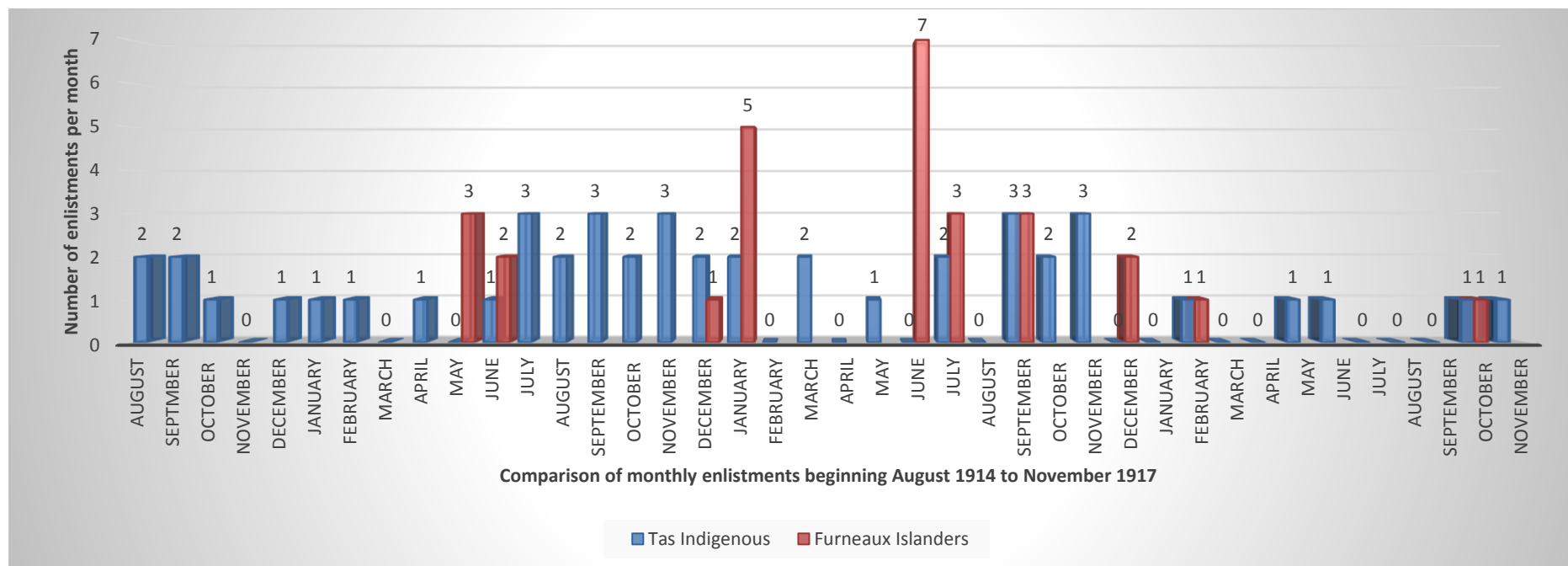


Figure 5: Comparison of the enlistment of Tasmanian Aboriginal soldiers compared with Indigenous from the Furneaux Islands, covering the period from August 1914 to November 1917 Source: NAA B2455 Personnel Dossiers



Illustration 20: Private John William Miller, a grandson of Fanny Cochrane Smith, enlisted in October 1914 and was serving with the 12th Battalion who were part of the 3rd Division which was given the honour of being the first division to land at Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915. Private Miller was killed in action that day but it would be nearly 12 months before he was officially listed as killed in action.

Source: *Weekly Courier* 9 August 1917, p24

Illustration 21: Private Stamford 'Tiger' Simpson, from Kangaroo Island enlisted on 28 August 1914. He also served on the Gallipoli Peninsula, but managed to survive his experiences both there and later on the Western Front, to return to live on Kangaroo Island.

Source: Rebe Taylor, *Unearthed*, p273





Illustration 22: Picture post card of Claude Brown that he sent to his 'Uncle Summers' circa 1917 and taken in an unnamed studio in England

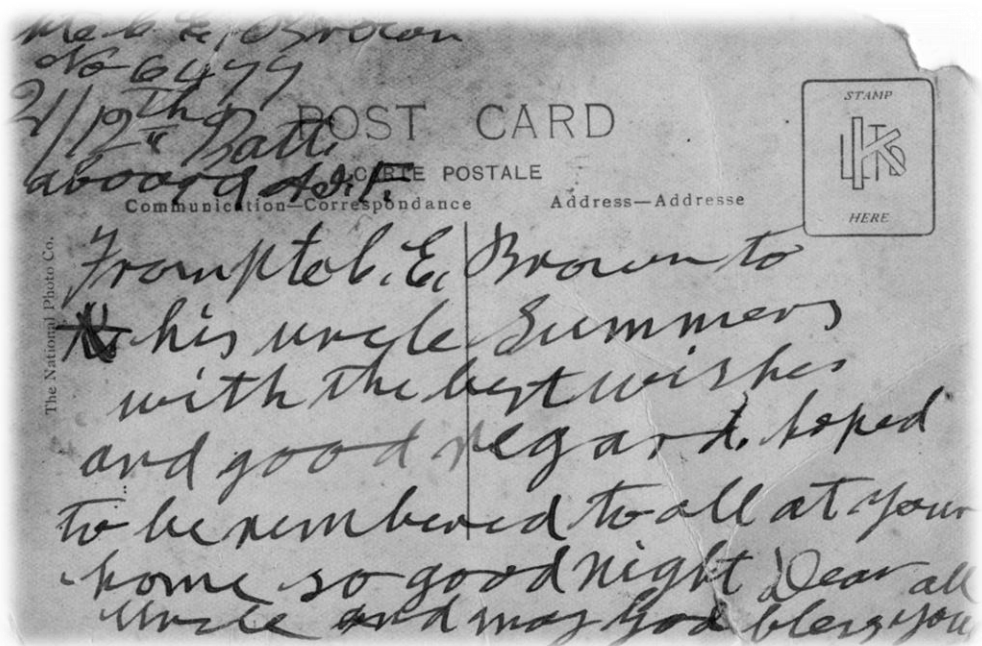


Illustration 22a: Source: Private collection



Illustration 23: Post card sent to Thomas Mansell's sister Winnie from Claremont Army Camp in early 1916. The photograph was most likely taken at the camp.

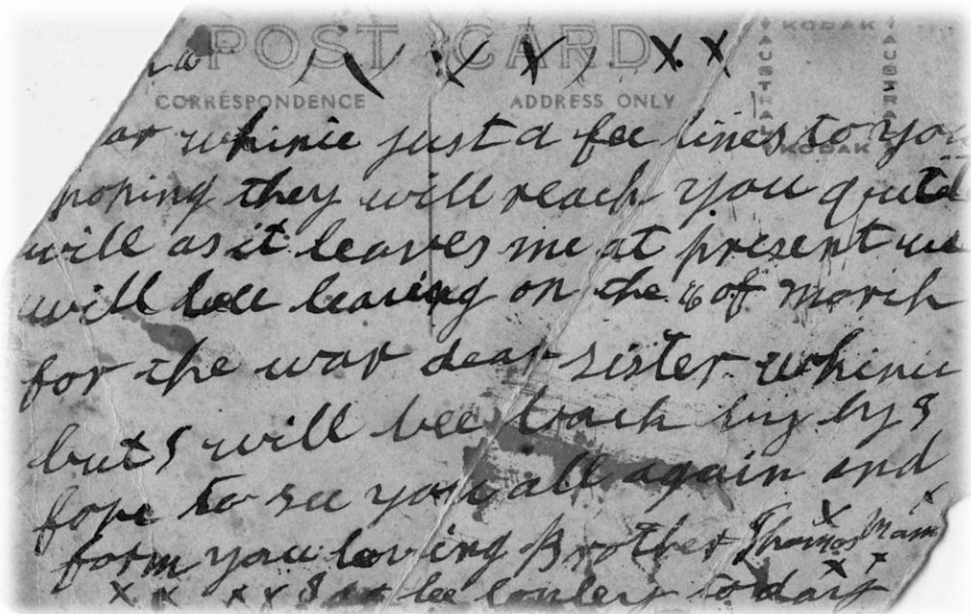


Illustration 23a: Source: Private collection

Chapter 5

The Australian is not inferior to others in stamina and fighting qualities...¹

*'I expect you know what we feel like over here or you have a good idear it terrible painful and serious but yet it can't make us lad down harted All my cobber are in Blighty having a spell with a slite wound they are coming back geragly. my best cobber will soon being going back to Australia very shortly I wish I was him his very lucky don't you think hah. If you have seen a happy pair youd have never seen a happy a pair than me [&] Frank he was the nices fellow one could ever meet. I mist him greatly when he left me he was the best soldier in the A.I.F. ... so did every one else that knew him ... I think me and he was nearly taken Prisoners once he & I was sleeping in the same dug out crock up like sardines and the Prussian guard made a big attack and when they came over what do you think happed well the first dug out they came to was the one me and Frank was sleeping in, but luck happen we were relieved about an hour before they came over we went back to supports and if we weren't relieved we would have been Prisoners of War in Germany they took a few of our fellow once but they made a marvellous escape and got back this is not half what I could tell you about the Battle in France what a soldier don't know it not worth known we have seen some sites of all kind you may see some of them in the book I am sending you I hope it will be there alright. After the war we are going to have a look all over England Scotland & Ireland so we will see some more sites yet. Its costing us nothing to see what we have seen. so far we haven't see any better places than Australia. France is a beautiful [country] but it rains to mutch why you never see the sun here'*²

Accounts of how Aboriginal soldiers fared in the trenches or on the battlefield during the First World War are relatively scarce. To date a small number of post cards written by Tasmanian Aboriginal soldiers have been located but amount to no more than a handful of lines. The letters home penned by Lance Corporal Charles Tendee Blackman to his pre-war employer Mr John Salter of Biggenden, Queensland are one of a very

¹ Honk, 12 August 1915, D. Kent, *From Trench and Troopship* (Alexandria, 1999), p.136

² Spelling per original - Australian War Memorial PRO1679 Letter dated France, 29 October 1917 from #2584 Lance Corporal Charles Tendee Blackman to his former employer Mr Salter

small number of surviving indigenous correspondence collections.³ As a member of the 9th Infantry Battalion, Blackman was a front line soldier who by late 1917 was battle hardened as well as being 'war weary'. He had seen action at Pozieres which he described as 'terrible' and had a couple of lucky escapes as can be seen by the extract from the letter quoted. Blackman had also been promoted to the rank of lance corporal.⁴ In his letters to Salter, Blackman told his former employer about the French countryside, how well he was treated by the British whilst on leave, and the actions he was involved in, including how many German soldiers he has killed. He also told Salter of feeling lonely at times and being homesick, despite having made friends among the men of the 9th Battalion.⁵

The absence of a body of letters or diaries compiled by Aboriginal members of the Australian Imperial Force may be a reflection of the fact that many were either denied access to, or were unable to access an education and, as a result, could not read or write, or had very limited literacy skills which precluded letter writing. But it could also be the case, as was suggested by Winegard, that Aborigines were not accustomed to writing letters having had a very strong history of oral communication. This is not borne out by Penny Van Toorn in her research for *Writing Never Arrives Naked*, who demonstrates that Aborigines had been using writing since soon after the arrival of settler Australians.⁶

As an N.C.O and later an officer, Jack Hearps made his way into the history of the 12th Battalion and the official history of Australia's involvement in the war of 1914-1918. Yet as few soldiers below the rank of sergeant were mentioned by name by Charles Bean in his volumes, Hearps remains an exception rather than a general rule.⁷ While battalion histories such as *The Story of the Twelfth* and *The Fortieth* often mention men among the ordinary ranks by name particularly if they were rewarded for an act of bravery, none paused to consider the social and ethnic origins of those on the

³ Charles Blackman Collection Australian War Memorial; T. C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War*, pp.212-3

⁴ A lance corporal was usually second in charge of a group of nine to sixteen men, forming a section within a platoon, depending on whether it was led by a sergeant or a lance corporal. Three or four sections usually formed a platoon, with four platoons forming a company. The same number of companies formed the basis of a battalion - www.awm.gov.au/atwar/structure/army-structure/ (accessed 24 June 2013)

⁵ Australian War Memorial PRO 1679 Charles Blackman Collection

⁶ T. C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War*, p.215; P. Van Toorn, *Writing Never Arrives Naked* (Canberra, 2006)

⁷ C. E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918: Volume 3, The Australian Imperial Force in France 1916* (Sydney, 1941), pp.799-800

battalion pay list. Some information can be inferred from nicknames, but otherwise official war histories implied that it was only settler Australians who served. For the first couple of decades after the war, Aborigines and non-white minority groups such as Chinese were not only excluded from the 'digger legend', a point made by Chris Coulthard-Clark, but were deliberately written out of it.⁸ While early Australian military histories were not interested in how Aborigines and other minority groups were treated in the front line, this situation has changed in more recent years, as historians try to rewrite Aboriginal soldiers and those of other ethnic backgrounds back into the 'digger legend'. Part of that process necessarily involves an assessment of the treatment Aboriginal soldiers received while in the front line, whether by the soldiers standing next to them in the trenches or by the military hierarchy.

Post-war, some settler Australian ex-servicemen wrote to *Reveille*, arguing that Aboriginal diggers were treated just the same as any other soldier. This chapter argues that while the army has long since been viewed as an equal opportunity employer for Aboriginal people Tasmanian Aboriginal experiences at the front line suggest that this may not have always been the case. In this chapter I put such claims about equality to the test in order to ascertain if there is any surviving evidence to suggest that Aboriginal soldiers were deployed in demeaning jobs while serving as frontline soldiers or whether they were just as likely to be exposed to active service as other Australian soldiers. I consider whether Tasmanian Aboriginal soldiers were more likely to be passed over for promotion. I also consider whether acts of bravery were more or less likely to be recognised through the awarding of medals, as well as comparing their record of disciplinary action with that of settler Australians. The aim here is to explore the extent to which military regulations may have been disproportionately used to control indigenous soldiers. Lastly, I consider what evidence if any, there is to suggest that the casualty rate among the indigenous soldiers was disproportionate compared to other groups.

An equal opportunity employer?

To ascertain how Aborigines were treated in the front line it is necessary to turn to a range of records such as courts martial, honours and awards, and newspapers or journals such as those published by the New South Wales R.S.S.I.L.A. (RSL), as well as a very small number of private records in public collections. In the August 1931 issue

⁸ Lieutenant C. D. Coulthard-Clark, 'Aborigines in the First AIF' pp.21-26

of *Reveille*, the editor W. J. Stagg asked readers to supply the names of any Aborigines who had served in the Australian Imperial Force.⁹ In response to Stagg's request several readers supplied not just the names of Aboriginal soldiers who had served alongside them, but glowing character references as well. Mr C. H. Wills from Mannum in South Australia recalled that George Carpenter had made 'an excellent soldier'. Mr Hunt from Concord West had a similar experience in the front line and stated that Private Thomas Bowen, who had served with him in the 18th Battalion, 'was a thorough gentleman', adding that 'a better comrade one could not wish for'.¹⁰ Major C.A.R. Munro of the 11th Light Horse Regiment attested to the bravery of a number of Aboriginal men who had been allotted to the 11th Light Horse Regiment, known to many as the 'Queensland Black Watch'.¹¹ Sergeant Clarence Lansley, in giving a character reference for Lance Corporal Edward Rees in 1918, testified that he was a good, honest, and brave front line soldier.¹² While these are just a few examples, such evidence would on the surface suggest that in the trenches and on the battlefield all soldiers were equal, and that discrimination on the basis of race was not a common experience.

Others agree. Peter Pedersen, in his battlefield guide to the Western Front, argues that Aborigines were treated as equals and were paid the same as 'white soldiers': a point that has been supported by other historians such as David Huggonson, as well as Aboriginal activists Jack Patten and Bill Ferguson.¹³ Pedersen concedes though that joining up was not always easy, with a number of volunteers being rejected on the grounds of race.¹⁴ Without citizenship rights, according to Russell McGregor, Aborigines who enlisted could never be anything more than 'mercenary-style soldiers akin to the native levies of European countries', such as the Senegalese.¹⁵ McGregor suggests that the Aboriginal soldiers were set apart from the main body to undertake other roles but such assertions are not supported by an examination of the relevant personnel dossiers.

⁹ *Reveille*, 31 August 1931, p.5

¹⁰ *Reveille*, 31 October 1931, p.15

¹¹ *Reveille*, 30 September 1931, p.6

¹² NAA B2455 Personnel Dossier #4356 Edward Rees

¹³ R. McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion: Aboriginal People and the Aboriginal Nation* (Canberra, 2011), p.50; K. Cameron, 'Citizenship through Military Service? *Teaching History* Vol 35, No. 2 June 2001

¹⁴ P. Pedersen, *Anzacs on the Western Front: The Australian War Memorial Battlefield Guide*, p.397

¹⁵ R. McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*, p.51

One person who would not have agreed with Pederson, but might have agreed with McGregor was former Private Stamford 'Tiger' Simpson from Kangaroo Island, who felt that he had been treated differently from other soldiers because of his Aboriginality. Simpson believed that he had been discriminated against by being placed in the cookhouse as a form of punishment. However, this is not borne out by his service record.¹⁶ The first Australian Imperial Force did not have cookhouses and a catering corps *per se*. Cooking was usually done behind the lines, on a platoon or section basis using an outdoor kitchen. If someone was identified as having experience as a shearer's cook or in cooking for large numbers of men, then it followed that they may be made the platoon or section cook. It was likely that Tiger Simpson might have become a cook's assistant, but would also have been expected to have had some combat capability when the battalion went into action.

Apart from spending 69 days being treated for venereal disease in Le Havre from late 1917 to early 1918, Stamford Simpson's record is without blemish.¹⁷ He enlisted in August 1914, and served with the 10th Infantry Battalion on the Gallipoli Peninsula, where he was wounded slightly. He was subsequently evacuated in late July 1915 with pleurisy followed by enteric fever, at which time it was decided that he should return to Australia for a change, which was a common practice at this time. In March 1916 he was deemed fit enough to be discharged to duty, and by August 1916, was back in England, when he was taken on strength with the 48th Battalion.

On 10 January 1917, in order to reduce the amount of wastage on the battlefield, the First Australian Imperial Force expanded the existing salvage sections that had operated since the landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula and set up five companies to recover equipment and other items, thus saving valuable shipping space. Each company comprised an officer and 69 other ranks.¹⁸ Simpson, who had initially been transferred to the 3rd Light Trench Mortar Battery on his return to the front, was moved yet again in March of the same year, joining the ranks of the 1st Division Salvage Company. Still in the front line, he now had a new role collecting weapons, ammunition, clothing, sandbags and barbed wire: in effect anything that could be reused. While no longer actively fighting, his new role was not without risk, particularly from booby traps left by the enemy. How or why Simpson ended up in the Salvage

¹⁶ R. Taylor, *Unearthed* pp.271-272

¹⁷ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #687 Stamford Wallace Simpson

¹⁸ www.aif.adfa.edu.au.8888 (accessed 27 June 2014)

Company is unclear. It is possible that he requested a transfer to this unit, feeling that it was a better option for him than being in the 3rd Light Trench Mortar Battery, or even returning to the 48th Battalion. It is also possible, of course, that Simpson was assigned similar duties to that performed by the South African Native Labour Contingent on account of his Aboriginality: but this remains to be tested.

On enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force every soldier was given identical rations and pay. While each soldier was also given a basic set of uniform and equipment, there were some variations depending on what unit they were allotted to – whether mounted or dismounted.¹⁹ There is a wealth of photographic evidence that shows that Aborigines were issued the same uniform and equipment as any other soldier on enlistment.²⁰ For example, Ernest ‘Morgan’ Mansell from Cape Barren Island was photographed at Claremont Army Camp prior to embarking for overseas in June, 1917. He is pictured wearing his full kit as well as carrying his rifle and bayonet; so too was William Henry Mansell junior. Fred Brown, who was wounded in action in 1918, chose not to wear his webbing and other accoutrements, instead posing in uniform wearing his flat-top service cap. This was the last image Morgan Mansell’s family received of the young labourer, who died of bronchial pneumonia just ten days before the Armistice was signed.²¹

Every private or soldier of equivalent rank (i.e. trooper, gunner etc.) was paid five shillings a day whilst in camp, and a further shilling a day on embarking for overseas. The extra shilling was held back as deferred pay to be paid on discharge.²² While many Aborigines would have been paid a lower wage than settler Australians for the same or a similar kind of work in civilian life, in the Australian Imperial Force rates of pay were based on rank only. Corporals and sergeants fared better than a private, being paid double at the higher rate of 10s and 10/6 respectively. Army wives were paid a separation allowance of 1/6d per day plus a further 4 1/2d per day for each child. Wives without children received £1/10/11 per week.²³ There is some evidence to suggest that not all the wives or mothers of the Aboriginal soldiers were paid their

¹⁹ *Australian Imperial Force Orders*, No. 2, 26 August 1914

²⁰ Photographs have so far been collected for around 60 per cent of the men in this study courtesy of Frances Rhodes, Brenda Hodge and Garry Kennedy, *Tasmanian Mail and Weekly courier* - most taken whilst in uniform and usually before embarkation.

²¹ F. Rhodes, *Photographic Record of Service Personnel – Furneaux Group* (Flinders Island, 1996)

²² P. Stanley, *Lost Boys of Anzac* (Sydney, 2014), pp.57-58

²³ P. Stanley, *Lost Boys of Anzac*, p.78

entitlements as in the case of Alex McKinnon. His mother 'Cobb' received a small parcel of his meagre belongings per his will, but the military, in their infinite wisdom decided that she would not value his medals and so were handed to his stepmother Mrs Mary McKinnon, a woman he had never met and who was not even aware of his existence until four years after his death in 1917.²⁴ While 'Cobb' was denied her sons' medals, she was eventually granted his gratuity in 1922, to be controlled by another. As pointed out by Doreen Kartinyeri in *Ngarrindjeri Anzacs*, other Aborigines did not have control of their own finances either, and may not have received their full entitlements.²⁵

Rations were normally requisitioned daily, based on the number of men 'on strength' within the battalion on any given day. Every battalion or brigade had a copy of the scale of rations that were to be supplied to the troops, and it was the duty of the Quartermaster to see that these were requisitioned and distributed. Often throughout the period of the war these could not be supplied to the troops, particularly when in short supply or in battle. Whilst often rather monotonous and at times lacking in nutrients, as was experienced for example on the Gallipoli Peninsula, every soldier of 'ordinary rank' was issued with the same rations.

Based on simply pay rates, rations and equipment it would appear that the first Australian Imperial Force was an equal opportunity employer. It is impossible to determine whether Aborigines were treated equally whilst in military service without considering other pertinent factors such as casualty rates, opportunities for promotion, rewards for bravery and number of offences with which they were charged. Settler Australian soldiers serving alongside Aboriginal soldiers later recounted that they were treated as equals. When service records are aligned, evidence emerges that this was not the case.

In order to further test the assertions made by historians and other commentators that Aborigines were treated equally in all areas of their service, four cohorts were formed for comparative purposes. These consist of Tasmanian indigenous Australian Imperial Force; a 1 in 5 sample of mainland Aborigines who volunteered and derived from the list of names published in *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Volunteers for*

²⁴ future.arts.monash.edu/onehundredstories – 'With Due Care' the story of Alexander McKinnon

²⁵ D. Kartinyeri, *Ngarrindjeri Anzacs*, pp.30-31

the A.I.F (AA); while the third and fourth groups are composed of men whose surname began with the letter 'B' (Tasmanian born, and Australian born).²⁶ Areas to be examined statistically included rates of promotion, casualties, decorations, crime and venereal disease. These were all areas where it was possible to make comparison between the experience of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal servicemen.

A further comparison was made based on the number of days served by the members of each of these four cohorts in order to obtain a more nuanced result. The reason for this approach was to take account of variations in the length of time served by the members of each cohort. The method enabled a more nuanced analysis of casualty rates, incidents of promotion, disciplinary procedures and venereal disease diagnosis. Finally, the Tasmanian indigenous soldiers were split into two groups – those from the Furneaux Islands group and those from mainland Tasmanian and Kangaroo Island. This split was made in order to test the hypothesis that the Furneaux Islanders may have been more readily identifiable as Aboriginal, and therefore perhaps more likely to have been discriminated against, compared to the descendants of Dalrymple Johnson and Fanny Cochrane Smith.

Promoted from the ranks:

Jack Hearps was fortunate to be promoted to the rank of sergeant on the formation of the 12th Battalion in August 1914. Seemingly the officers in charge of the battalion believed that, despite his youth, he had enough experience from his time in the cadets and the ability to perform the tasks required of a sergeant. As a non-commissioned officer, Hearps became responsible for the discipline and welfare of up to 30 or 40 soldiers. Over the next four years, eight Tasmanian Aborigines were promoted in the field including Vernon Johnson who had enlisted with the 1st Battalion, serving on the Gallipoli Peninsula before joining the Ordnance Depot as an armoury sergeant on 12 February 1918.²⁷ As an artilleryman and part of a unit with a higher ratio of non-commissioned officers than would be found in an infantry unit, Cyril Kennedy managed to rise through the ranks before being promoted sergeant on 11 June 1918.²⁸ A further

²⁶ P. Scarlett, *Australian and Torres Strait Islander Volunteers for the A.I.F and Letter 'B'* Database provided by Professor Kris Inwood of Guelph University, Canada

²⁷ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #409 Alfred John Hearps

²⁸ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #4387 Cyril James Kennedy; an artillery unit may have as many as 4-5 officers and 15-20 non-commissioned officers for every 70 men and so the chances of promotion were far greater

five men from this study were also promoted to the rank of lance corporal, including James Mansell from Cape Barren Island and Edward Rees from Sheffield.²⁹

As can be seen from Table 3 (p130), the number of Tasmanian Aborigines promoted is twice that among mainland Australian Aborigines, but much less than that among settler Australians who had a far greater chance of being promoted beyond the rank of private. Interestingly, a mainland born Australian from the letter 'B' cluster would seem to have had an even better chance of promotion than a Tasmanian born soldier. Maybe there was something after all in Private Denver Gallwey's observation of the Tasmanians who joined the 52nd Battalion when he noted their pink complexions and youthful appearance, commenting that they looked more like boys than men.³⁰ Possibly the Tasmanians were seen in a different light to their mainland counterparts, which told against them when the military hierarchy were looking to promote men through the ranks.

Lloyd Robson, in his statistical work on the first Australian Imperial Force determined that among his cohort 17 per cent were promoted at some time during their period of enlistment, with a further five per cent being commissioned as officers, presumably in the field and after enlistment.³¹ While Tasmanian Aborigines and the Tasmanian Born B's were slightly below Robson's figure of 17 per cent for Non-commissioned Officers, the Australian Aborigines fared worst of all the four cohorts. Only the Australian Born B's came close to the figure of five per cent of officers among the cohort, with Tasmanian Born B's slightly below. An examination of promotions received per day served revealed even larger differences (see table 3, p.131). Indigenous Tasmanians needed to put in 6,073 days for each promotion received, compared to just 4,591 for settler Tasmanians. While showing large disparities between the two groups, further allowances need to be made between those in the infantry and the artillery particularly where there was a greater ratio of Non Commissioned Officers.

The possibility of joining the officer ranks seems to have been an entirely different matter. A junior officer (2nd Lieutenant) was usually responsible for a platoon of around 30 men, a similar number to that of a sergeant, but a lieutenant, however had greater authority and was required to understand the technicalities usually associated

²⁹ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #4436 James Vivian Mansell; #4356 Edward Rees

³⁰ C. Deayton, *Battle Scarred: the 47th Battalion in the First World War*, (Newport, 2011), p.77

³¹ L. L. Robson, 'The Origin and character of the first A.I.F., 1914-1918: Some statistical evidence', *Historical Studies*, Vol 15, No.61, p.739

with a variety of weapons, battle tactics and the formalities of military law. He also needed to have won the respect and confidence of his men.³²

Now a Company Quartermaster Sergeant (C.Q.M.S.), Hearps was one of a group of nine 12th Battalion men commissioned in the field on 5 August 1916, following the battalion's heavy losses at Pozieres.³³ One image of him taken pre-war is of a young man who has a dark complexion, but with few features associated with being Aboriginal.³⁴ Whether Alfred Hearps saw himself or even identified himself as being an Aborigine is not known.³⁵ His time as an officer was short-lived, as Hearps was mortally wounded leading his men into battle at Mouquet Farm on 19/20 August 1916.³⁶ It is quite likely that Hearps was the first Aborigine to be commissioned as an officer in the Australian Imperial Force, taking a similar path to that which would be later travelled by Reginald Saunders, who also rose through the ranks. According to Winegard, Hearps was not the only soldier of Aboriginal descent to be commissioned as an officer in the field, citing two other unnamed men – one serving with the 6th Light Horse, and another with the 51st Battalion.³⁷ He is certainly, however, one of the first individual of Aboriginal ancestry to receive a commission.

Promotion was supposed to be based on a person's ability first and foremost, although this included literacy skills, as it was necessary to be able to absorb the information contained within the various manuals that were used by the military, to be able to follow written instructions, and to compile messages as needed particularly for sergeants and above.³⁸ It is therefore quite possible that a lack of education restricted the promotional opportunities for some Aboriginal soldiers who may have shown leadership, but lacked other attributes considered necessary for command. Other factors should also be considered and include the length of service and whether the person was in the infantry or artillery, the latter having a higher number of officers non-commissioned officers. Also societal attitudes towards men of colour need to be

³² J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle: a study of Agincourt, Waterloo and the Somme* (Harmondsworth, 1976) pp.277-81

³³ J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle: a study of Agincourt, Waterloo and the Somme*, p.103

³⁴ www.ancestry.com.au – Pat's Blackaby Family Tree 1 (accessed 11 December 2013)

³⁵ It would appear that knowledge of the family's connection to the Aboriginal community had become hidden only re-emerging over the last thirty years or so. Just when it was covered-up is not clear from conversations with members of the family

³⁶ The name of 2nd Lieutenant A. J. Hearps is recorded on the Australian memorial at Villers-Bretonneux for those men who have no known grave

³⁷ T. C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War*, p.199

³⁸ This did include their literacy skills which according to Roger Lee head of the Army History Unit was a major factor

taken into consideration. Not everyone would be prepared to take orders from a coloured person, particularly an Aboriginal who was not then considered citizens of Australia. How these may have impacted on an individual's chances of promotion is difficult to quantify or assess with so little evidence apart from the personnel dossiers. Certainly the Tasmanian Aborigines had to have served longer before any chance of promotion, when compared to the Tasmanian Born Letter 'B' sample.

For bravery and devotion to duty:

Brave or exceptional deeds performed in the heat of battle by Aborigines were recognized and appropriately rewarded with decorations similarly so too were other coloured troops. There were no Victoria Cross winners among the Australian Aborigines unlike among the Indian troops but their valour and gallantry in battle was recognised. Following the assault on Chunuk Bair in early August 1915, the Native Contingent from New Zealand suffered heavy losses with at least 50 Maori losing their lives. Not only did their gallantry earn them the respect and admiration from other troops, but 10 men had their actions rewarded. Te Rangi Hiroa was awarded the Distinguished Service Order with nine others receiving military awards. Others would follow. In 1917 Pula Tamihana serving with the Pioneers was decorated with the Croix de Guerre by the French.³⁹

The deeds of Charles Hearps from Devonport and Jack Johnson (serving under the alias of John Rollins), from Sheffield were both recognised by the awarding of the Military Medal for their bravery whilst in action. According to the citation in March 1918, when the 40th Battalion were in action near Morlancourt, Driver Charles Hearps 'brought his team up a load of ammunition under heavy shell fire and across ground swept by machine gun fire', thus ensuring a much needed supply of ammunition.⁴⁰ Lance Corporal John Rollins, who was serving with the 52nd Battalion, was awarded for his 'bravery and devotion to duty in going out repeatedly under heavy shell fire' during operations near Zonnebeke in September 1917 'to locate and repair broken signal

³⁹ 'Maori and the First World War' <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/maori-in-first-world-war> (accessed 12/7/2015)

⁴⁰ www.awm.gov.au/research/people/honours: *London Gazette* 16 July 1918, page 8332, position 78 and *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* 27 November 1918, page 2264, position 115 (accessed 12 December 2013); F.C. Green *The Fortieth: A Record of the 40th Battalion*, A.I.F. (Hobart, 1922), p.118

wires, thus ably assisting in keeping up communications.⁴¹ Private William Irwin was one Australian Aborigine in that particular cohort to have his bravery recognised with a Distinguished Conduct Medal, second only to a Victoria Cross, following operations at Road Wood in August 1918.⁴² At least eleven other Aborigines also had their bravery recognised, including Corporal Albert Knight who was also awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, while Private Frank Stewart was awarded for a Mention in Despatches along with eight men who were awarded the Military Medal.⁴³

This analysis would at first glance suggest, however, that Aboriginal soldiers in the First Australian Imperial Force were less likely to be decorated. This is particularly evident in terms of the number of awards made per days served.⁴⁴ It is possible that there are other explanations as to why only a few Aborigines were awarded medals for bravery. One of these, according to Lindsay Watson is that 'roughly 26 per cent served in theatres outside the Western Front, where units generally received 50 per cent fewer decorations.'⁴⁵ Another reason sometimes provided for the discrepancy is the change to the existing rules regarding enlistment, allowing 'half-castes' to enlist in 1917 after the promulgation of Military Order 200.⁴⁶ Neither of these reasons applied to the Tasmanian Aborigines, as the majority served with either the infantry or the field artillery on the Western Front, and only a handful enlisted after the promulgation of the rule allowing the enlistment of 'half-castes'.⁴⁷ There is no evidence to suggest that their service record went un-noticed and this is certainly the case when they are compared to other empire contingents consisting of non-Europeans.⁴⁸

Dealing with the 'hard doers':

⁴¹ www.awm.gov.au/research/people/honours: *London Gazette* 14 January 1918, page 846, position 151 and *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* 23 May 1918, page 1124, position 172; N. Browning, *The 52nd Battalion A.I.F.* (Huntingdale, 2009), p159

⁴² NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #792 Private William Allan Irwin

⁴³ Compiled by Lindsay Watson star@kurbinjui.org.au, p4 (accessed 30 July, 2014)

⁴⁴ With the small numbers involved in the four cohorts, the decision was made not to include them in the tables

⁴⁵ L. Watson, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Soldiers of the First World War' *Kurbingui Star*, Zillmere Queensland (20 October 2006)

⁴⁶ Military Order No. 200 for 1917 Circular 113, stated that 'half-castes' may be enlisted in the A.I.F. provided that the examining Medical Officers were satisfied that one of the parents was of European origin.

⁴⁷ T. C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War*, p.237

⁴⁸ Australian Aborigines did receive decorations at a rate that is around twice that of the Indian Expeditionary Force (9,200 decorations out of 1.1m = 0.8%). This is extraordinary when the Indians were considered to be highly decorated

Aboriginal soldiers were also subject to discipline under the same Field Service Regulations as any other Australian soldier. The men of the first Australian Imperial Force soon gained a reputation as being high spirited and independent thinkers. For some, being told what to do and when to do it came hard, and as a consequence the men rebelled by flaunting military rules, and suffered the consequences of their actions. Their superior officers punished them with loss of pay, being confined to barracks, given detention with hard labour or a period of field punishment.⁴⁹ Others thought that they were being treated like schoolboys and acted accordingly, trying the patience of their sergeants and superior officers.⁵⁰

Around 40 per cent of the Tasmanian Aborigines in this study faced a disciplinary procedure or court martial at some time during their period of service with the first Australian Imperial Force. Between them, they committed at least 85 individual offences, ranging from misdemeanours such as being late for parade or having an unclean tent, to the serious charge of desertion whilst in the front line. All were considered to be breaches of military regulations which needed to be dealt with by a superior officer in a disciplinary procedure or through a formal Court Martial, and subsequently punished if found guilty. The vast majority of the men committed only one or two offences, although six men committed a total of 51 offences between them, well over half the number recorded. These men, some of whom might have been considered 'slackers' (as in the case of Douglas Cox) or 'hard doers', 'hard drinkers' or even 'incorrigibles' were to be found in every battalion, along with men who inspired and led by example.⁵¹

According to Peter Stanley, Australians had a propensity for going absent, which became almost a badge of pride, 'a sign of the larrikinism of the Australian volunteer, of an independent spirit that the military machine could not extinguish.'⁵² Being absent without leave (AWL) was viewed by many historians and soldiers alike as a victimless crime and at the lower end of the scale, particularly when units were out of the line. On another more serious level, absenteeism undermined the subordination

⁴⁹ Field Punishment No. 1 - for major offences and entailed tying the soldier to an object such as a post or limber wheel for several hours a day, often with arms outstretched. Field Punishment No. 2 – similar but the offender was not physically bound to the spot. See *Bad Characters: Sex, crime, mutiny, murder and the Australian Imperial Force* pp.101-105

⁵⁰ P. Stanley, *Bad Characters: Sex, crime, mutiny, murder and the Australian Imperial Force*, p.21

⁵¹ P. Stanley, *Bad Characters*, p.57

⁵² P. Stanley, *Bad Characters*, p.65

which armies expected of their men. When in the line, such absences were treated very differently, as will be seen in the case of Lance Corporal Edward Rees. The offending pattern of Tasmanian Aborigines was no different from the settler Australian Imperial Force, with the most common offence being 'absent without leave' which made up over half of all the charges.

Some men, it would appear, were able to comply and follow the instructions given and the discipline required by the military: others could not. For Douglas Cox, barely a month had passed since enlisting on 8 July 1915, when he went 'absent without leave'. He was later fined five shillings. After committing a further six infractions of the army regulations over a two month period, it was decided that he was a 'slacker' and a 'menace to discipline of any squad, etc., of which he is a member'. The commanding officer of 'D' Company 19th Depot Battalion recommended that he be discharged for disciplinary reasons.⁵³ It is quite possible that his brother, who had enlisted on 3 November 1916, also decided that he too wasn't cut out for life in the Australian Imperial Force, and simply left. He was later declared a deserter.⁵⁴

Private Archie Willmore Smith appeared before a disciplinary procedure on eight separate occasions, including two Divisional Courts Martial, and over a relatively short period of time. On each occasion he was charged with the offence of being 'absent without leave', among others. Smith told the officers at the Divisional Court Martial at Sutton Veny on 1 December 1917, that prior coming to England, he had not committed any offences, but was unable to resist the temptation of going absent without leave.⁵⁵ He then expressed his desire to go back to France as soon as possible, seemingly to keep out of trouble. Rather than his wish being granted, Smith was awarded 30 days Field Punishment No.2 which meant that he had to undergo hard labour for a specified period each day for the next 30 days, and that he would do so wearing either fetters or handcuffs in order to prevent his escape.⁵⁶

If the number of times Smith faced a disciplinary procedure is anything to go by, it would seem that he was determined to stay out of the clutches of the Australian

⁵³ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier for Douglas Lancell Keith Cox

⁵⁴ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #6971 Lionel Cox - he was not the only one to desert among the Tasmanian Aborigines – John Kennedy was declared a deserter on 15 March 1916, having enlisted on 3 September 1915 NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #3307 John Sydney Kennedy

⁵⁵ NAA A471 No. 12376 Field Court Martial Proceedings against Archibald Willmore Smith

⁵⁶ Rules for Field Punishment, *Manual for Military Law*, London, 1914, p.721

Imperial Force, and if possible to see something of the British Isles in the process. He could easily be labelled as one of Stanley's 'incorrigibles'. On the seventh occasion that he was charged with being 'absent without leave', he got as far as Glasgow before being apprehended and was given 28 days detention as a result. This was not the first time he had served a period of detention either, having previously been awarded 68 days for absenting himself for nearly a month before being apprehended at Richmond Green. Serving at least two periods of detention was no deterrent for Smith: nor was the thought that his behaviour might have consequences later when he returned to civilian life. His last appearance was on 9 February 1919 for an unauthorised absence of five days (having just returned from another period of absence lasting two weeks), at which time he was found guilty and given seven days Field Punishment No. 2. At the end of March 1919 Smith boarded the *Khyber* for his return to Australia, and discharge.⁵⁷

One of the most serious charges to be laid against anyone in this study was that which was brought against Lance Corporal Edward Rees, a clerk from Sheffield, when he appeared before a Field General Court Martial on 21 May 1918.⁵⁸ Rees was charged with 'when on active service deserting his Majesty's Service in that he absented himself without leave from 17 April 1918, til apprehended by Military Police on 2 May 1918 at Morbecque'. On the morning of 17 April 1918, his company's position was heavily shelled and the company was ordered to scatter.⁵⁹ Rees and Lance Corporal Frank Cole took refuge in the cellar of an estaminet, where they proceeded to get drunk. After drinking heavily for a couple of days the men recovered their senses: but as neither man felt comfortable about returning and facing their mates, they wandered around, eventually arriving at Hazebrouck. While they both stated that they had no intention of staying away, they just kept putting off their inevitable return. They were later arrested and charged.

While neither man gave a statement in mitigation, Rees stated that he enlisted in September 1915 and had arrived in France in April the following year. Since then he had been wounded twice, first at Pozieres and again at Le Barcque. He had also taken part in the fighting at Bullecourt and Lagincourt in May 1917. Sergeant Clarence Lansley appeared as a character reference for Rees, stating the he had known him for

⁵⁷ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #12408 Archibald Wilmore Smith

⁵⁸ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier # 4356 Edward Rees

⁵⁹ L. M. Newton, *Story of the Twelfth*, (Hobart, 1925) pp.177-178

about 18 months, and that he had found him to be a good honest soldier who, when in the line, had always done his duty willingly, no matter how dangerous things were, and without any grumbling or complaint. Rees and Cole were found guilty and given a sentence of two years' detention with hard labour, although both sentences were suspended.⁶⁰

Rees returned to the battalion now in camp near La Creule, although he seems to have had some issue over his pay book that was not resolved to his satisfaction.⁶¹ Instead of staying with his battalion and getting the matter sorted out, he again absconded. He remained absent for eight days before he was once more arrested. He was held in custody until 4 August, when he was charged with being absent without leave and found guilty. Rees was then sentenced to one year's detention with hard labour. The suspended sentence was also put into execution, with both sentences to run concurrently. On 26 September 1918 he was admitted to the No. 4 Military Prison in France and later to the No. 1 Military Prison, from where he was released on 7 April 1919.⁶²

The severity of the sentences might be a reflection of a growing frustration on the part of the military authorities. According to a General Headquarters report of August 1918, despite one in ten or twelve members of the British Expeditionary Force being Australian, almost half of those posted as absent on any given day was a member of the Australian Imperial Force.⁶³ Around the time that Rees went absent, it was noted that of the 2071 men absent across the British Expeditionary Force, 1680 were Australian, an increase of just over 81 per cent. A chart compiled by the War Office and circulated by the British General Headquarters showed that throughout 1918, 'Australian units had approximately nine times more men per thousand in military prisons in France than British units, and almost six times the number of the other Dominion formations.'⁶⁴ Rees' sentences also reflect the gravity of the situation of going 'absent without leave' or of deserting whilst in the front line.⁶⁵ Had he been

⁶⁰ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #4356 Edward Rees

⁶¹ AWM4/23/29/43 rcdig1005678 Unit War Diary – September 1918

⁶² NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #4356 Edward Rees

⁶³ GHQ Report, 12 August 1918, WO 32/5484

⁶⁴ A. Ekins, 'Fighting to exhaustion: Morale, discipline and combat effectiveness in the armies of 1918' in A. Ekins (ed) *1918 Year of Victor*, p.112

⁶⁵ P. Stanley, *Bad Characters*, p.185

serving in the British Army or even the New Zealand Army, the consequences could have been quite different in that deserters could be, and often were, executed.

Manuals and pamphlets set out the regulations and procedures that were to be followed in the case of any breaches, but the imposition of military law depended largely upon common sense, discretion, judgement and experience, all of which took time to acquire, according to Stanley.⁶⁶ As a result, some officers were more lenient than others when imposing sentences, particularly at disciplinary procedures in the field, where procedures were often of a more summary character. In one battalion, for instance, a man might be let off a charge of drunkenness, while in another he might face his company commander, who could reprimand the soldier and suggest he be more careful in the future. Officers administering military law also bore in mind that the members of the Australian Imperial Force were volunteer citizen soldiers, and not part of the regular army.

Rees may well have been suffering from a degree of shell shock and therefore acting out of a sense of self preservation. He had been in action on several occasions when the battalion's position was heavily shelled, including enduring a night of bombing as they lay out in the open near Flesselles.⁶⁷ Maybe the bombing that the 12th Battalion suffered whilst in billets at Pradelles on 17 April 1918 pushed him to the limits of his endurance.⁶⁸ As pointed out by Ashley Ekins, Australian soldiers were rapidly becoming exhausted, 'their prolonged involvement in combat operations had taken a heavy toll.'⁶⁹ This was evident by the sharp increase in absence without leave and desertion. At about the time Rees went absent, about 200 cases were being tried each month, according to Charles Bean. 'A man gets sick at heart – stays away 24 hours – and then is afraid to come back; this sort of desertion is getting more common.'⁷⁰ A. D. Ellis, in his history of the 5th Division, noted that men who had been decorated (some more than once) were now deserting to creep away for a week and sleep in some dingy cellar, as they were exhausted. He questioned whether that was in fact

⁶⁶P. Stanley, *Bad Characters*, pp.70-72

⁶⁷ L. M. Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, pp.176-77

⁶⁸ L. M. Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, p.178

⁶⁹ A. Ekins, 'Fighting to exhaustion: Morale, discipline and combat effectiveness in the armies of 1918' in A. Ekins (ed) *1918 Year of Victory*, p.114

⁷⁰ C. E. W. Bean, *Diary*, 14 May 1918, AWM38 3DRL 606/110

desertion in the true sense.⁷¹ Had Rees not taken himself off a second time, he would have not only avoided prison, but might have been able to have had his obvious nervous condition assessed at the very least.

The proportion of men in each of the four cohorts facing disciplinary procedures varied considerably, not always in a way that one might anticipate. When viewed as a percentage, the number of Tasmanian Aborigines who appeared before a disciplinary procedure was considerably higher than their mainland counterparts. Just over 40 per cent of the Tasmanian Aborigines appeared on a charge, compared with 22 per cent of mainland Aborigines. Both groups were over-represented in comparison to charges brought against settler Australians in the First Australian Imperial Force. This was particularly the case, however, amongst Aboriginal Tasmanians, who were nearly three times more likely to be the subject of disciplinary action compared to non-indigenous Tasmanians. This remained true both in raw percentage terms and as a proportion of days served.

The rates for those killed in action whilst serving with the first Australian Imperial Force were 63,163 or around 19.1 per cent, with a further 152,422 casualties including some who died later of their wounds or from disease.⁷² Total casualties amounted to 215,585 or 64.98 per cent of those who embarked with the Australian Imperial Force.⁷³ By the signing of the Armistice, ten of the Aboriginal Tasmanians in this study had been killed in action, a further five had died of wounds, one had died as the result of an accident, and three from sickness. The latter included William Gower, who died in England on 4 November 1918, from influenza having been wounded in action at the end of August.⁷⁴ Two others also died whilst in uniform: George Ernest Brown, who died at Hobart prior to embarkation and Private Augustus 'Gus' Smith who died from nephritis on 19 December 1919 at Fovant Military Hospital, England.⁷⁵

As a percentage, the number of deaths among the indigenous Tasmanian soldiers at just under 26 per cent was not only the highest among the four cohorts but it was significantly higher than the rate for the whole of the Australian Imperial Force (at just

⁷¹ A.D. Ellis, *The Story of the 5th Australian Division*, quoted in Ashley Ekins, 'Fighting to exhaustion: Morale, discipline and combat effectiveness in the armies of 1918' in A. Ekins (ed) *1918 Year of Victory*, p.115

⁷² B. Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p.289. The cut-off date to be included among the war dead is the end of August 1921

⁷³ B. Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p.289

⁷⁴ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #14604 William Harold Gower

⁷⁵ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #2232 Augustus Eugene Smith

over 19 per cent).⁷⁶ While among the mainland Aboriginal cohort just over eleven per cent died as a result of their service. This figure included one soldier who died as a Prisoner of War.⁷⁷ Winegard attributes the lower casualty rate as being due to the fact that during the bloodletting of 1916 and 1917, fewer Aborigines were serving; moreover, 26 per cent were serving in mounted units which incurred lower casualty rates than their infantry and artillery counterparts. While this might in part explain the lower casualty rates for mainland Aborigines, it does not apply to those from Tasmania, as most enlisted prior to May 1917 and served with the infantry. Out of the 53 men who served at the front, 75 per cent (40) were allotted to infantry, mainly the 12th and 40th Battalions.

Not included in the national figures of those who died on active service are the men who died prior to embarkation. Among this group was George Ernest Brown from Whitemark, Flinders Island.⁷⁸ He had initially volunteered in June 1915 but was discharged with a spinal curvature. Twelve months later he managed to convince the medical officers that he was fit, and was accepted into the Australian Imperial Force. During the winter of 1916 an epidemic of cerebral spinal meningitis (or 'spotted fever' as it was sometimes called) was moving through the state, and afflicted some of the men in camp at Claremont. On or about 7 July 1916 George Brown became ill and was transferred to the Hobart General Hospital, where he was diagnosed with cerebral spinal meningitis. The treatment given to him was ineffective and he died four days later.⁷⁹

A further twenty indigenous Tasmanian soldiers were wounded in action, several on more than one occasion. Again, the indigenous Tasmanian soldiers had the highest casualty rate among the four cohorts. This may be explained in part by the fact that the majority were used as infantry soldiers and in the front line and had enlisted prior to any changes to the regulations allowing 'half-castes' to enlist. It may also be that the 12th Battalion in particular which was formed in Tasmanian in August 1914, had seen action from the day of the landing at Gallipoli until the last weeks of the war. The battalion sustaining 2927 casualties either killed or wounded whilst in France alone

⁷⁶ B. Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p.289: 63163 deaths is 19.1% of 330,770 who embarked for service abroad

⁷⁷ None of the Tasmanian Aborigines were taken Prisoner of War

⁷⁸ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier T1320 George Ernest Brown

⁷⁹ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #T3120 George Ernest Brown; *The Mercury* 12 July 1916, p.4 – the article mentioning two unnamed people, with the second being a child from Westbury, the other being George Brown, despite not being named

without taking into account the losses that were sustained on Gallipoli.⁸⁰ Tasmania's own 40th Battalion suffered losses of 2165 men. The lower number may be a reflection of the fact that the battalion was not formed until 1916 and its first major action was at Messines in June 1917.⁸¹

Among those who returned with a serious and lasting disability was Private James Anderson from Tarleton. He had been wounded in action on 2 April 1917 with a severe gunshot wound to his left ankle. His treatment required a below the knee amputation.⁸² Another to return with serious injuries was James Vivian Mansell. He enlisted in December 1915 and was eventually allotted to the 52nd Battalion. In late May 1917 he was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal. The 52nd Battalion was in action at Messines in June 1917 when Mansell sustained a severe gunshot wound to his right arm and shoulder, fracturing his radius and ulna. After receiving treatment at a Casualty Clearing State and the 2nd Stationery Hospital at Abbeville, he was sent to Looting Military Hospital in England for further treatment, but after less than a month there it was decided that he should return to Australia. On arrival in Hobart he received further treatment for his wounds, and was discharged from the Australian Imperial Force in April 1918.⁸³

Including those wounded, officially Australia had the highest casualty rate of all the Commonwealth countries that took to the battlefield between 1914 and 1918: 64.8 per cent of all those who enlisted were either killed or recorded as wounded in action.⁸⁴ Next was New Zealand, with a casualty rate of 58.6 per cent, and Canada, at 49.7 per cent. While the United Kingdom sent over 5 million men to prosecute the war, their casualty rate was only 47.1 per cent. At the lower end of the scale was South Africa, with a casualty rate of 13.6 per cent, and India, with just 9.1 per cent despite having sent over 1.3 million soldiers. The total casualty rate for Tasmanian Aboriginal soldiers was much higher than the national average. It was also significantly higher

⁸⁰ The battalion lost 189 men at least on the landing (Officers and ORs)

⁸¹ F. C. Green, *The Fortieth: A Record of the 40th Battalion A.I.F.*, p.293

⁸² NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #332 James Henry Anderson

⁸³ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #4436 James Vivian Mansell

⁸⁴ Figures published by C.E.W. Bean in *Official History of Australia in the War 1914-1918, Volume 1* gives a total casualty figure of 215,585 (52.14%). This figure is slightly higher than that produced by the British War Office for 1919, which stated that total casualties were 214,360 as printed in D. Noonan, *Those We Forget: recounting Australian casualties of the First World War*, (Melbourne, 2014) p.6

than the rates recorded for the three other cohorts in this study as show in Table 1 and 2 (pp129 - 130).⁸⁵

Recently, these figures have been questioned by David Noonan following what amounts to a recount or review using modern sampling methods and greater access to records than would have been available previously to men such as Dr A. G. Butler, particularly in relation to hospitalisations due to illness and injuries whether deliberate or accidental which were not available.⁸⁶ Noonan believes that around '318,100 (315,300 -320,800 at the 95% Confidence Interval)' embarked for active service overseas.⁸⁷ The total death toll for the first Australian Imperial Force, using an analysis of the record review, established that 62,300 died 'of which 53,600 deaths were attributable to battle causes and 8,700 to non-battle causes or 19.6%, leaving 255,800 men to survive the war.⁸⁸ It still remains that the casualty rate among the Tasmanian Aborigines was higher than the national figure suffering a higher proportion of deaths whilst on active service.

From the time the men entered camp in Tasmania either at Pontville or later at Claremont, soldiers contracted a vast array of diseases and other medical conditions, many of which required hospital treatment. Diarrhoea and enteric fever were common among all soldiers serving on the Gallipoli Peninsula for any period of time. Stamford Simpson was returned home for 'a change' in October 1915, having contracted enteric colitis.⁸⁹ The conditions there have been well documented with the lack of water, monotonous diet, lack of suitable clothing, flies, lice, heat, cold, and general lack of hygiene all contributing to a steady attrition rate among the Australian Imperial Force. Many soldiers wrote home complaining that it was impossible to eat or sleep due to the flies and vermin, and the noise of battle at close quarters.

After the atrocious conditions on the Gallipoli Peninsula and the heat and sand of Egypt, the Australian soldiers were happy to see the lush green countryside of France. Little did they know of the new and different horrors of war that awaited the men when they reached the Somme and, later, Flanders. The high rainfall, biting cold, and mud provided new obstacles to be overcome. With men often living in close quarters,

⁸⁵ A. G. Butler *The official History of the Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918 Volume III Special Problems and Services*, Table No. 10, p.880

⁸⁶ D. Noonan, *Those We Forget: recounting Australian casualties of the First World War*, p.37

⁸⁷ D. Noonan, *Those We Forget*, p.116

⁸⁸ D. Noonan, *Those We Forget*, p.120

⁸⁹ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #687 Stamford Wallace Simpson

outbreaks of communicable diseases such as mumps and measles were not uncommon, usually requiring hospitalisation. Chest complaints were also common, particularly among the men from the Furneaux Group: bronchitis; pneumonia and pleurisy were among the complaints commonly experienced. For example, Thomas Mansell developed influenza in November 1916 as the weather deteriorated into one of France's coldest winters on record. Within a week he had died from his illness. His father back on Cape Barren Island was left to read of his son's death in the newspaper before being officially notified.⁹⁰

On the Gallipoli Peninsula, it had been lice which invaded the seams of the men's clothing and provided a skin irritant which were a problem. In France, it was a different louse which caused Trench Fever or 'Quintan Fever', a moderately serious disease transmitted through a skin abrasion or louse-bite wound.⁹¹ Around one third of Australians suffered from the condition during the First World War. To cite an example, Cecil Maynard already had a septic left foot when he was admitted to the 1st Casualty Clearing Station. When he was also diagnosed with Trench Fever, the decision was made to evacuate him to England for treatment.⁹² Scabies was another skin condition that required hospital treatment and was also contagious: for example, Sydney Burgess had at least two admissions to hospital for treatment for scabies.⁹³ For the men of the Light Horse Regiments, malaria was a problem, and in severe cases could prove to be fatal. Edward Lee contracted malaria in July 1918, when serving with the 3rd Light Horse Regiment. He was hospitalised for nearly four weeks before being sent to a rest camp.⁹⁴

As Kate Blackmore discovered when researching hospital admissions recorded in service records, they are very scant on detail and not very accurate as far as diagnosis. Few other medical records from this period have survived, meaning that social historians have to rely mainly on the service records themselves. The problem with this is that those annotating the service records were more concerned with which unit the soldiers were serving with, the movement of the men into or out of the line, and their fate, such as killed in action, marked for return to Australia, or similar.

⁹⁰ NAA B2455/1Personnel Dossier #5151 Thomas Edward Mansell

⁹¹ *Dorland's Pocket Medical Dictionary*, p269 – a louse borne rickettsial disease due to *Richettsia quintana*

⁹² NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier # 4988 Cecil Walter Leon Maynard

⁹³ NAA B2455/1Personnel Dossier #5055 Sydney Burgess

⁹⁴ NAA B2455/1Personnel Dossier #3268 Edward James Lee

Among the Tasmanian Aborigines around 17 per cent returned to Australia early, i.e. prior to the signing of the Armistice, due either to a war wound or some form of illness or debility that precluded any further service. Julian Everett was one example, having arrived in England on 19 October 1916 with a group of reinforcements. He managed to get as far as Etaples and was taken on strength with the 12th Battalion before being admitted to hospital with influenza a month later. He was later evacuated to England, where he remained for the next twelve months. In October 1917 he was marched in at Le Havre and proceeded to join his unit, which was now in Belgium. Just days after joining his battalion, he was sent from the line, and a week later was admitted to hospital at Etaples where he was diagnosed with pulmonary tuberculosis. He returned to England for treatment, and was then sent home in May 1918.⁹⁵ George Fisher, another Cape Barren Islander, was also sent home early with chest problems in April 1918.⁹⁶

Not all injuries or disabilities were war-service related: for example, Claude Brown had managed to pass his medicals without his deafness being detected until he got to England.⁹⁷ Whilst in the training camp there it was discovered that he had a hearing problem, and as a consequence he was returned home in 1917 without seeing front line service. Leo Maynard was another with a serious ear problem and sent home under similar circumstances, but not before he had been critically ill following an operation for a mastoid condition.⁹⁸ Keen to join his older brother, Leo Kennedy enlisted underage. This went undetected for some time, but eventually it came to the attention of the senior officers in the 12th Battalion, and Kennedy was sent back to Australia.⁹⁹

The remainder of the group returned to Australia in 1919 having served out the war, and waited their turn to embark. The fact that they returned home without having sustained any wounds should in no way diminish their contribution to the war effort. It is likely that these men brought home with them the unseen but nevertheless very real scars of war that would remain hidden from all but those closest to them. Very few men could return from the charnel house that was the Western Front and not be

⁹⁵ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier for #6271 Julian Clifford Everett

⁹⁶ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier for #374 George Godfrey Fisher

⁹⁷ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier for #6477 Claude Eyre Brown

⁹⁸ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier for #3992 Leo Victor Maynard

⁹⁹ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier for #7755 Leo Joseph Kennedy

affected by it in some way. The sights, sounds, and smells that they witnessed remaining with them for many decades to come.

While the men in this study suffered from a range of medical conditions as well as wounds received in action, venereal disease was much more problematic, as can be seen in Table 4 (p.131). Even before the first transports left Australia in October 1914, venereal disease became one of the Forces' greatest problems. For example, Earle Sellers, an 18 year Blacksmith and one of three brothers from Scottsdale who volunteered for enlistment, spent about nine weeks in the Australian Imperial Force before being discharged as being 'worthless' and breaking out of the V.D. Hospital where he was being treated. He was just one of nearly 7,000 men who were admitted to camp hospitals in Australia for treatment.¹⁰⁰ Any sign of venereal disease does not seem to have been picked up on his initial examination on 13 October 1915 when he was passed fit, possibly with symptoms only emerging shortly afterwards.¹⁰¹

For the next four years the military authorities struggled to control what amounted to an epidemic, as fit young men away from the controlling influences of home sought the company of the opposite sex whenever the opportunity arose. Early in 1915, whilst still in Egypt, around 1000 men were infected at any one time, enough men to form a battalion.¹⁰² The number of hospital admissions for VD reached their peak in 1916, with 148.1 per 1000 Australian soldiers in Britain being treated. A further 72.6 soldiers per 1000 were being sent to England from the battlefields of France and Belgium for treatment. The following year the figures dropped to 129.2 and 59.6 per 1000 respectively, with a slight increase in 1918 when the figures rose again to 137.12 and 63.65, as men became more war weary and sought the company of women to release some of the stresses of war.¹⁰³

Sermons on chastity and prevention from contracting the disease were generally to no avail. By the end of 1917, medical officers realised that their most pressing concern had to be either prevention or treatment: sermonising (although it continued to be used by some) was not very effective. One solution employed was to make it a 'crime' to get infected: another was a 'vast campaign of medical prophylaxis and 'preventative treatment'. In February 1915 a special military order was laid down which stated that

¹⁰⁰ A. G. Butler *The Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914018, Volume III Special Problems and Services*, p.886

¹⁰¹ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier for Earle Hartoul Sellers

¹⁰² P. Stanley, *Bad Characters* p.36

¹⁰³ A. G. Butler, *The Official History or the Australian Army Medical Services* Volume 111 p.180

'no pay will be issued while abroad for any period of absence from duty on account of venereal disease.'¹⁰⁴ Concealment was already a 'crime' under the *King's Regulations*.

To make matters worse, the pay allotted by a soldier to his family was also stopped, with the forfeiture being recorded in his pay book. The idea was that this would force the soldiers to think twice about their actions if they did not want to lose pay and did not want their families to learn what they had been up to, but this only worked up to a certain point, and other solutions were needed to keep men at the front rather than in hospital in England.

The treatments were often barbaric and intrusive by today's standards, and required at least six weeks in one of several dermatological hospitals such as that at Bulford. Early in 1918 pay stoppages were changed to 2/6 per day, with the loss of field allowances for officers whilst off duty. Seventeen men from this study were diagnosed with a venereal disease which required hospital treatment. The diagnosis rate for Tasmanian Aborigines was considerably higher than for their mainland counterparts or the settler Australian groups. Nevertheless, since the majority of Tasmanian Aboriginal men from this study who contracted the disease were single, there were only three wives left to find out what their husbands had been up to whilst on leave or out of the front line.

As pointed out by Jock Phillips, war was not only chaos, but a very brutalizing experience. In battle a soldier learned to become a beast 'sloughing off a million years of human repression' as he raced forward to meet the enemy, going from a civilised human being to 'slime'. War also reversed moral pieties: survival being the name of the game. In order to cope, particularly in the front line and to release pent up tensions, men would drink to excess, swear profusely and find some release or tenderness in the arms of a prostitute – 'a whore was at least a step on the road to normality'.¹⁰⁵

One possible reason for the greater rates of diagnosis of VD amongst Aboriginal servicemen is that they were subjected to greater levels of medical surveillance. A general issue with all diagnostic rates is that they are often more informative about medical practice than they are of underlying disease rates. While it is possible that

¹⁰⁴ A. G. Butler, *The Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services* Volume 111, p152

¹⁰⁵ J. Phillips 'The Quiet Western Front: the First World War and New Zealand Memory in Santanu Das ed, *Race, Empire and First World War Writing*, (Cambridge, 2011), pp.243-44

Tasmanian Aboriginal servicemen were more sexually promiscuous (a sign perhaps that the one place where they were not discriminated against was in the brothels of France and England), it is equally possible that military doctors were particularly fastidious when it came to recording the evidence of Aboriginal sexual conduct,

Another factor may have been that the timing of enlistments with most enlisting before 1917 when treatment kits were being handed out as a matter of course. In Egypt in 1915 General Birdwood vetoed the use of prophylactic kits on moral grounds. On reaching Europe prophylactic kits variously called 'Blue Light, Blue Label' or 'dreadnought' kits were freely available for men going on leave. These were to be used immediately before and after intercourse and were available free of charge at A.I.F. depots in England and France. Condoms were also available for sale.

A more likely explanation is the army's determination to bring the instances of venereal disease under control and stop the bleeding of men needed for the front line. Hundreds of thousands of inspections were made of men returning from leave in an effort to detect cases early and provide 'abortive treatment' in an attempt to kill VD bacteria in its early stages of infection in the hope of avoiding having to send men to hospital for longer treatment and therefore away from the front line. Aboriginal servicemen would have been caught up in these inspections the same as any settler Australian soldier. Soldiers who were sexually active and used the services of prostitutes ran the risk of contracting a venereal disease.

Treatment was seen as fairly crude by today's standards before the development of antibiotics. Men were subjected to a range of treatments. In 1915 sandalwood oil was being used in Egypt. It was believed that by repeatedly syringing the urethra the toxins in the sandalwood would kill the gonorrhoea bacteria in the urethra. But if repeatedly used in high doses could cause other problems including being absorbed into the blood stream.¹⁰⁶ Later the use of sandalwood irrigations would be replaced by the use of urethral injections of silver for gonorrhoea and mercury for syphilis. Treatment usually lasted between one and three months depending on the severity of the case and how the person responded to the treatment. The treatments themselves were not without side effects and for some though would leave side effects that would re-appear later in life. Nor does it seem that they were truly cured as in the case of George Fisher who

¹⁰⁶ R. Dunbar *The Secrets of the Anzacs: the untold story of venereal disease in the Australian Army, 1914-1919* (Brunswick, 2014), pp.106-7

required a right leg amputation for syphilitic osteomyelitis in 1930 having contracted gonorrhoea and syphilis whilst on active service.¹⁰⁷

A detailed examination of the data extracted from the personnel dossiers of four cohorts of servicemen suggest that the Tasmanian Aboriginal experience of war was different to their settler Australian counterparts. When it came to casualty rates, rates of promotion, courts martial and venereal disease, it would seem that not all soldiers were treated equally once in uniform. There were significantly higher casualty rates (deaths and wounds) among the Tasmanian indigenous cohort, and more disciplinary appearances and cases of venereal disease among Aborigines, as well as a much smaller chance of being promoted. The data suggests that Aborigines may have been marginalised at the very least if not actively discriminated against whilst in the first Australian Imperial Force. The most logical explanation would seem that they were targeted by the military hierarchy on account of their ethnic background, although it is possible that since they were disproportionately working class, their treatment reflected a more widespread undercurrent of elitism that discriminated against socially marginalised enlistees, regardless of ethnic origin.

The Tasmanian Aborigines who form the basis of this study can be divided into four distinct groups – northern Tasmanian, southern Tasmanian, Furneaux Islanders and Kangaroo Islanders. The Commonwealth Government census figures for the ‘half-caste’ population on the eve of the First World War would suggest that only the Aborigines living on Cape Barren Island and nearby Flinders Island were included in this category. By omitting or not recognising any Aborigines living on mainland Tasmania, it would seem that the population living on the Furneaux Islands were the only group recognised at a federal government level. To ascertain whether the experience of the men from these islands was any different to that of the men from mainland Tasmania, the Tasmanian Indigenous cohort was split into two groups.

The experiences of the Tasmanian Aboriginal soldiers from the Furneaux islands, brings into sharp focus the treatment of Aborigines in the front line. Based on the evidence, an individual soldier’s chance of promotion was greatly reduced, with just one individual among the group being promoted past the rank of private. James Mansell, an 18 year old farm labourer from Cape Barren Island was promoted to the rank of lance corporal in May 1917. His time as a Non-commissioned officer would be

¹⁰⁷ NAA P107 Personal Case Files (1914-1918 War) R1435 George Godfrey Fisher

short: he was severely wounded in action the following month, and was returned to Australia in July 1917 with a fractured radius and ulna.

Largely because of small numbers, the other results are inconclusive. A soldier from the Furneaux Group had the same chance of dying whilst on active service. An indigenous mainland Tasmanian soldier died every 2,915 days when compared to 2,811 days for the Furneaux Group. A Cape Barren Islander was less likely to be wounded, serving only 1,789 days compared to 3,886 days for mainland Indigenous Tasmanians for every wound reported on their service record. In contrast, it would appear that they were either better behaved or came to the attention of authorities less than other Aboriginal Tasmanians. They were, however, more likely to be diagnosed with venereal disease. On the whole, this more detailed comparison did not produce compelling evidence that Cape Barren Islanders were more likely to be discriminated against than mainland Tasmanian Aboriginal soldiers.

A further comparison was made between the records of Tasmanian Aboriginal servicemen and settler Tasmanians with unskilled occupations in order to determine the extent to which the apparent manner in which the former appear to have been discriminated against was driven by class, rather than issues of race (Table 6 p. 133). This comparison is revealing. It suggests that the lack of promotion opportunities afforded to Tasmanian Aboriginal soldiers may have been driven by low rates of literacy and social standing, factors they shared in common with settler servicemen from working class backgrounds. However, the comparison indicates that the disproportionate casualty, disciplinary procedure and VD diagnostic rates experienced by Aboriginal diggers are unlikely to be the product of class alone. In other words the evidence suggests that, despite receiving equal pay, race (as well as constraining Tasmanian Aboriginal people to the lower rungs of Tasmania's social hierarchy) may well have shaped the Tasmanian indigenous experience of service in the First World War. In the next chapter these men's experiences following their return to Australia will be explored.

Table 1: Disposal and casualty rate including those discharged prior to embarkation and those who survived to return to Australia

	TAS Indigenous		B' Sample TAS		National Indigenous		National 'B' Sample	
Discharged prior to embarkation		16.2%		14.7%		23.0 % [#]		3.1%
Killed or died of wounds or illness		27.1%		15.3%		11.5 % [*]		23.8%
Wounded in action		27.0 %		24.7 %		26.4%		22.0%
Returned to Australia (not wounded)		29.7%		45.3%		39.8%		51.2%
Total	N=74	100.0%	N=148	100.0%	N=148	100.0%	N=160	100%

[#] included 9 who were discharged as having been irregularly enlisted or were not of substantial European origin

^{*}included Rufus Rigney who died as a prisoner of war in Germany

Source: NAA B2455 Personnel Dossiers

Table 2 Battle and Non battle casualties

	TAS Indigenous		B' Sample TAS		National Indigenous		National 'B' Sample	
Killed in action or died of wounds	16	40.0%	21	35.0%	14*	25.0 %	34	46.6%
Died of disease	3	7.5%	1	1.7%	2	3.6%	4	5.5%
Died prior to embarkation	1	2.5%	1	1.7%	1	1.8%	0	0%
Wounded in action	20	50%	37	62.0%	39	70.0%	35	48 %
Total	40	100%	60	100%	56	100%	73	100%
Days served per death		2,733		5,789		6,116		3,905
Days served per wounded		2,733		3,414		2,666		4,240

Source: NAA B2455 Personnel Dossiers

Table 3: Rates of Promotion

	TAS Indigenous		B' Sample TAS		National Indigenous		National 'B' Sample	
Private	45	83.3 %	123	80.9 %	110	96.5 %	112	72.0 %
NCOs	8	14.8 %	24	15.8 %	4	3.5 %	37	23.6 %
Officers	1	1.9 %	5	3.3 %	0	0.0 %	7*	4.4 %
Total	54	100.0 %	152	100.0 %	114	100.0 %	156	100.0 %
Days served per promotion	6,073		4,591		25,994		3,372	

*includes three who enlisted as officers

Sources: NAA B2455 Personnel Dossiers

Table 4: Court martial, Casualty and Venereal Disease Rates including rates based on the number of days served

	TAS Indigenous		B' Sample TAS		National Indigenous		National 'B' Sample	
Disciplinary Procedures	30	40.5%	22	14.8%	33	22.3%	38	23.8%
Diagnosed with V.D.	17	22.97%	15	9.86%	6	4.1%	9	5.0%
Days served per court martial	1,822		6053		3,151		3,905	
Days served per VD diagnosis	3,215		8,877		17,329		18,547	

Source: NAA B2455 Personnel Dossiers

Table 5: Court martial, Casualty and Venereal Disease Rates among Tasmanian soldiers only based on the number of days served

	Cape Barren Islanders	Other Tasmanian Aborigines	Letter B Tasmanians
Days served per promotion	19,679	4,372	4,591
Days served per Disciplinary procedure	2,811	1,521	6,053
Days served per death	2,811	2,915	5,789
Days served per wounded	1,789	3,886	3,414
Days served per VD diagnosis	3,936	2,915	8,877

Sources: NAA B2455 Personnel Dossiers

Table 6: Court martial, Casualty and Venereal Disease Rates among Tasmanian soldiers based on the number of days served

	Tasmanian Aborigines	Letter B Tasmanians Labourers	Letter B Tasmanians
Days served per promotion	6,073	6,106	4,591
Days served per Disciplinary procedure	1,822	3,757	6,053
Days served per VD diagnosis	3,215	8,140	8,877

Source: NAA B2455 Personnel Dossiers

Illustration 24: James Vivian Gladstone Mansell aged 18 from Cape Barren Island. He enlisted on 14 December 1915 and initially served with the 12th Battalion. He was serving with 52nd Battalion when seriously wounded in action at Messines on 7 June 1917 sustaining a fractured radius and ulna. He was invalided home in July 1917.

James Mansell later listed in World War 11 whilst living in Hobart.

Source: Frances Rhodes

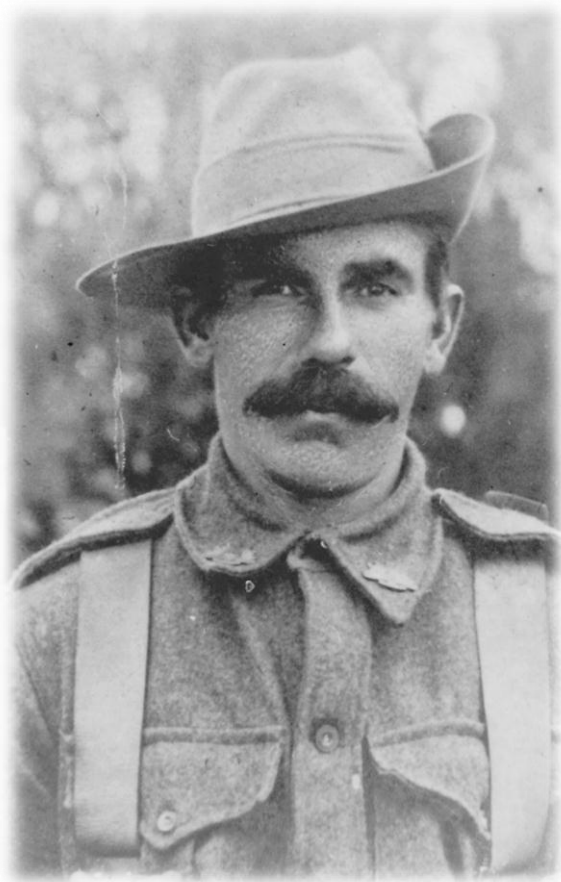


Illustration 25: Frederick William Brown aged 37 from Cape Barren Island – enlisted on 6 December 1916 and was allotted to the 40th Battalion. He was wounded in action in April 1918 receiving a gunshot wound to his left leg. Brown returned to Australia in November 1919. He died on 25 February 1931 and is buried at Carr Villa Cemetery, Launceston

Source: Frances Rhodes

Chapter 6

Homeward bound at last! The Repat will see me through¹

That's All

Don't want no fuss when I come home,
Don't want no crowds to cheer,
Don't want to visit all the pubs,
Nor mop up all the beer.
Don't want no blessed band to play
'The Conquering 'ero Comes',
Don't want to hear the trumpets blare,
No beatin' of the drums.
Just want the place I calls me 'ome
-the folk I love the best,
A decent job at a decent screw
And a decent bit of rest.
'Sling'²

On 4 March 1919, Private Sydney Burgess was finally discharged from the first Australian Imperial Force having spent three years, one month, and seven days in the service of his country. He was now free to return to his home and family on Cape Barren Island, to recover his health, and to resume his pre-war life. Since enlisting he had been hospitalised for scabies twice, reported missing, and had been wounded in action three times, the first being at Mouquet Farm in September 1916 after yet another disastrous attack on the German stronghold, when he received gunshot wounds to his head and chest. After receiving treatment in England and convalescing he re-joined his battalion seven months later.³ On 14 August 1917 while the battalion was near Kemmel, Belgium, employed on fatigue parties, Burgess sustained shrapnel wounds to his face and right loin.⁴ On this occasion he was sent to the French coast

¹ C. Lloyd and J. Rees, *The Last Shilling* (Carlton, 1994) p.2

² D. Kent, *From Trench and Troopship*, p.199

³ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #5055 Sydney Burgess

⁴ AWM4/23/69/17 Unit War Diary - August 1917 rcdig1006275 Unit War Diary – August 1917; N. Browning, *The 52nd Battalion A.I.F.*, p.88; Loin – part of the back between the thorax and pelvis

for treatment and about eight weeks later was once more among the men of the 52nd Battalion. In early May 1918, while the battalion was in the Cachy Switch Trenches between Villers-Bretonneux and Cachy, 'sporadic barraging, predominantly shrapnel with a few gas shells, descended onto the 52nd Battalion's lines.'⁵ At least one private was killed and three others became casualties. Among them was Burgess, who sustained shrapnel wounds to his left foot.⁶ On this occasion the wound was serious enough for him to be evacuated to England for treatment, and this prompted his eventual return to Australia.

As the guns fell silent on the Western Front at 11 am on 11 November 1918, another battle for many soldiers was just beginning. This was one battle that would continue long past the signing of the Armistice as the men returned home and tried to pick up the threads of their former lives, or to refashion a life that they could live with after experiencing the death and destruction of the battle fields of the World War 1. Some would make the transition more successfully than others, particularly those who had employment to return to and family support. Still, this was no guarantee in relation to their future wellbeing, with many war veterans struggling to come to terms with what they had witnessed or been through. Some took to the road and wandered the country as they tried to leave the war behind.

Few Australian families escaped the impact of the First World War as sons, brothers, husbands, uncles and cousins went off to fight a war thousands of miles away, many destined never to return, of those who did so, most were changed by the experiences of death, trauma and loss and as witnesses to numerous horrific sights. Whether many Australian soldiers realised it or not, returning home would be the hardest part of the journey that those who survived would undertake: one which, according to Martin Crotty and Marina Larsson, would 'require courage, resilience and flexibility of mind as well as the support of comrades, friends, family and government.'⁷ Few Australians would be prepared for the enormous scale of support that was required for the men of the Australian Imperial Force to pick up the threads or refashion their lives on their return. Even bureaucracy struggled to meet the needs of the veterans and their families.

⁵ N. Browning, *The 52nd Battalion AIF*), p.253

⁶ AWM4/23/69/26 pt1 War Diary for May 1918 rcdig1006287; N. Browning, *The 52nd Battalion*, p.253

⁷ M. Crotty and M. Larsson, (Eds) *Anzac Legacies* (North Melbourne, 2010) p.3

Many promises were made by recruiting officers and others on the part of the Commonwealth as an inducement to encourage men to enlist, particularly post 1915. The men were promised in very broad terms that the Commonwealth government would look after them on their return. If they did not return, then the government would look after their families. In order to meet its obligations, the Commonwealth government set up the Repatriation Scheme or 'Repat' as it would be commonly referred to by the war veterans. The Repat system was supposed to cover all soldiers who enlisted.

This chapter argues that structural disadvantages that accrued to Aboriginal returned servicemen following their repatriation were a function of geographical isolation and comparatively poorer standards of education that arose through a confluence of class and race. In this chapter I consider how the Repat responded to the Aboriginal war veterans from Tasmania and their families to explore if they were treated equally to other veterans in having their medical and financial needs met. I also examine to the extent to which the records indicate that these men were able to integrate back into civilian life.

While Gallipoli was the focus of attention for the period up to December 1915, it was on the Western Front where Australia not only suffered its greatest losses but also experienced its biggest successes. Here, 295,000 Australian men served, with a casualty rate of over 60 per cent. Even before the war had ended, 93,000 men had been returned home to Australia, 75,000 of whom were invalids and/or unfit for further military service. Among them was Private George Hearps who had served with the 52nd Battalion.⁸ Hearps sustained a gunshot wound to his knee whilst the battalion was in action near Villers-Bretonneux, driving the German Army out of the Picardy region.⁹ After treatment in England, it was decided to send him home for a change. Three days before the signing of the Armistice, Hearps was discharged from the Australian Imperial Force.¹⁰

From the return of the first wounded soldiers in 1915, the response on the part of the Australian government had been slow. With no comprehensive social welfare scheme in place, the government expected that individuals and volunteer organisations would provide relief for soldiers and their dependents. While many individuals did try to help

⁸ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier # 3478 George Clarence Hearps

⁹ N. Browning, *The 52nd Battalion 1916-1919*, pp.250-252

¹⁰ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #3478 George Clarence Hearps

and organisations such as the Red Cross became heavily involved, with the high number of wounded soldiers returning and placing demands on the limited services that existed, the government soon realised that it needed to assume what would be an unprecedented role, starting with a pension scheme in October 1914 which was more compensatory by its very nature. The government's response arose less through a concern for the welfare of those who had served and their dependents, and more from the fact that many who had returned early were disaffected and threatening not only to disrupt law and order by lounging about city streets, drinking and clashing with police, but were also proving disruptive in other ways by threatening to de-rail the recruitment drive and later anti-conscription rallies across the country.

In an attempt to look after those who had served during the First World War, the Australian government belatedly introduced the Australian Soldiers Repatriation Act in July 1917, as an indicator of its obligations to 'those who on its behalf have gone down into the Valley of the Shadow of Death and that they may be regarded as not altogether unworthy either of Australia or of those who heroically fought and suffered in its defence.'¹¹

The 'Repat' system that was developed to take care of the men of the first Australian Imperial Force was unique to Australia but similar systems were also put into place elsewhere, such as New Zealand, Canada and Britain. The literal meaning of the word *repatriation* 'of returning to one's native land' is, according to Stephen Garton, totally inadequate in describing the wide range of policies that were put in place for the re-establishment of Australian men and women when they returned from the First World War. By 1917, with the passing of the Australian Soldiers Repatriation Act 1917 and the establishment of a Repatriation Commission, the fine lexical distinctions were lost, and the term *repatriation* came into general use as the term employed by many Australians to describe a range of policies involving the returning, discharging, pensioning, assisting and training of returned men and women.¹² The term 'the repat' also found its way into popular usage when referring to the vast medical and welfare bureaucracy that was established to service the needs of these men and women as they aged.

¹¹ *Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act*, Acts of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1917, No. 37; Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates 18 July 1917, p.195; C. Lloyd and J. Rees, *The Last Shilling*, p.5

¹² S. Garton, *The Cost of War Australians Return* (Oxford, 1996), p.74-5

The 'Repat' became central to the lives of many men who served in World War 1 as they returned home and tried to pick up the threads of their pre-war lives, to find work, and to manage the many problems that emerged as they aged. This would not always be a positive experience, with many returned veterans having to battle for long periods of time with the departmental doctors, sometimes without success, in order to get their various medical conditions accepted as war related, as demonstrated by historians Marina Larsson and Kate Blackmore.¹³ Many wives and dependent mothers also had to battle with the department not only to get their pension entitlements, but to keep them.

What remains to be seen is the manner in which Aboriginal soldiers and their dependents were treated and to determine whether returning indigenous diggers received the same treatment under the 'Repat' system as settler Australians. To ascertain this, it is necessary to consider how many of these men applied for Repatriation benefits after they returned, and how many were successful, as well as to assess the benefits they received and the length of time they were in receipt of such support.¹⁴

Historians have tended to concentrate on the appalling conditions that the Australian soldiers endured whilst on the Gallipoli Peninsula, which were characterised by periodic epidemics of enteric fever and related illnesses. While most soldiers considered the conditions on the Western Front better than those they endured at Gallipoli because they could actually get away from the front during leave to Britain or Paris, once again they were forced to endure similar conditions. Their poor physical condition usually resulted from a lack of basic hygiene, poor nutrition, lack of conventional shelter, weather related problems and a heavy use of tobacco and alcohol when available. This saw many men succumb to varying medical conditions which required hospitalisation.

Approximately 152,000 were either wounded in action or gassed.¹⁵ Medical advances developed prior to and during the First World War, including antiseptics and new surgical techniques, saw a reduction in the death rate when compared to previous

¹³ M. Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs: living with the scars of war* (Sydney, 2009) and K. Blackmore, *The Dark Pocket of Time: War, medicine and the Australian State, 1914-1935* (Adelaide, 2008)

¹⁴ J. Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge, 1999), p.150

¹⁵ M. Larsson, 'The Part We Do Not See' in M. Crotty and M. Larsson, (Eds) *Anzac Legacies* (North Melbourne, 2010) p.40

conflicts. The possible down side of this was that a proportionately higher number of disabled soldiers returned home to be cared for by their families. By 1920 approximately 90,000 Australian ex-servicemen were in receipt of a war disability pension. While some were cared for in institutions often run by charitable organisations such as the Red Cross, the vast majority were being cared for by their families, as had been expected by the Federal government.

When the number of soldiers being assessed and or treated at Casualty Clearing Stations or Field Ambulances (approximately 212,000) in France is added to the number wounded or gassed, then the true cost of war becomes evident. Sickness among Australian soldiers on the Western Front was once again a serious problem for the military authorities, just as it had been on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Respiratory tract infections, trench fever or pyrexia of unknown origin, trench feet and scabies-borne illness accounted for nearly half of all admissions to field ambulances in France during the period 1916-1919.¹⁶ Sickness, rather than wounding or gassing was the greatest cause of *wastage* or the loss of manpower on the Western Front.

Sickness, in some cases, kept men out of the line for long periods of time or prevented them from making the journey to France and to the front line. When combined with the numbers of men wounded, 'the wastage' as Dr. A. G. Butler, medical historian of Australia's involvement in the war, termed it, was high among the Australian soldiers, referring to the numbers lost to front line action whether through being wounded or ill as was seen in the case of Private Julian Everett. Jack Johnson who served under the name of John Rollins, being underage had at least eight hospital admissions during his four years and three months of service including two admissions as the result of being wounded in action and another two for treatment for a venereal disease. He was also evacuated from Gallipoli in August 1915, with a range of medical problems including enteric fever and a septic knee and in March 1917 for treatment for scabies. The same year he was awarded a Military Medal for his work at Zonnebeke.¹⁷

While the military were prepared to persevere with Everett, the same could not be said for Philip Johnson. He had enlisted in August 1915 and embarked for overseas two months later. Less than a year after volunteering he returned home for discharge, the reason stated being 'general nervous debility'. He had originally been admitted to the

¹⁶ K. Blackmore, *The Dark Pocket of Time* (Adelaide, 2008), p.31

¹⁷ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #1867 Jack Roy Johnson alias Rollins

Convalescent Depot at Helouan in early February 1916, and diagnosed with neurasthenia. The fact that he returned drunk whilst at Helouan would not have been looked upon favourably.¹⁸ Symptoms of neurasthenia can include a chronic abnormal fatigability and lack of energy among others.¹⁹ If this was the case, then it would have been unlikely that he would have survived the rigors of training in the heat of Egypt or the cold and wet of France, let alone being in battle.

War changed these men physically and mentally, often in ways that they would not have imagined when enlisting. As argued by Joanna Bourke in her study of the male body in the World War 1, the maelstrom that was Gallipoli, the Somme, Ypres and Bullecourt wrought unprecedented carnage on the bodies of its participants.²⁰ The injuries from bullets, explosives, shells and bombs redefined the scale of war suffering, such as that experienced by Private Sydney Burgess or Private George Hearps. The improvement in treatment and medicine in this period meant that a significant proportion of the injured survived compared to previous wars conducted in the late 19th century.²¹

In order to cope with, treat, and care for the mass of soldiers who had returned, the Federal government needed to establish Australia's first venture into mass medicine – the Repatriation Health Care service. The scheme operated in conjunction with other areas of the repatriation system including vocational support, pensions, hospital and medical care. Approvals for pensions were dependent on medical examinations that defined the nature and extent of the veteran's incapacity. Only illness or injuries established as being related to or aggravated by a veteran's war service were treatable and compensable under the Repatriation scheme, as the scheme was intended to be compensable rather than a welfare scheme *per se*.

For those whose injuries were accepted as being due to war service, specialist health care was provided through a network of providers, including the Repatriation General Hospital in Hobart or the Repatriation Ward in the Launceston General Hospital. As well as the hospitals, a network of urban and rural doctors and specialists were

¹⁸NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #2853 Philip Johnson – by 1946 he was described as an invalid pensioner when murdered by a known assailant in a hut near Hastings, Victoria

¹⁹ Dorland's Pocket Medical Dictionary, Twenty-second Edition, p.458

²⁰ J. Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the World War 1*, (London, 1966) p.31

²¹A. Richardson, *The Long Road Home: Repatriation in Tasmanian, 1916-1929* PHD Thesis University of Tasmania, 2005, p.102

contracted by the Repatriation Department to look after these men. While the medical aspect of the Repatriation Scheme was aimed at repairing as far as was practicable the bodily damage caused by war, the process of obtaining the medical, hospital and pension assistance was at times very confronting, confrontational and intensely personal. It was also open to criticisms such as those published in the *Medical Journal of Australia* in 1918 lamenting the slowness in establishing properly equipped orthopaedic services and a properly adjusted neurological system to treat the returned men as soon as they returned.²²

Clifford William Gower was one of several men who found life post-war difficult, and consequently moved around frequently coming into contact with the law. Gower enlisted in May 1917, and was to have embarked with the 9th reinforcements, 40th Battalion, but failed to do so, finally embarking with the 12th reinforcements in February 1918. Having reached England at the end of April 1918, he then went 'Absent without Leave' for nearly a month. As a result, Gower was sentenced to 45 days detention at Lewes Barracks. He returned to Australia in early January 1919.²³ Using the Electoral Rolls and newspapers it is possible to trace some of his movements in the years after his discharge. In the early to mid-1920s, his name appears in the newspapers on several occasions in relation to offences which appear to have been alcohol related, both in Tasmania and at Broken Hill. During the 1930s he was living in various places including Port Kembla, Ward 27 State Hospital, Lidcombe and finally at Kangaroo Valley working as a labourer.²⁴ In 1942, now a soldier in the 31st Garrison Battalion, he appeared in the Criminal Court, Sydney, and pleaded guilty to a charge of the malicious wounding of a woman and was given 10 years servitude.²⁵ Gower later returned to his home state and obtained work with the Australian Pulp and Paper Mills at Burnie.²⁶ It is possible that he later moved to Hobart, and may be the same Clifford William Gower who was buried at Cornelian Bay Cemetery in May 1965.²⁷

²² 'Post War Cripples' *Medical Journal of Australia* 16 March 1918, p.217 quoted in C. Lloyd and J. Rees, *The Last Shilling*

²³ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #7993 Clifford William Gower

²⁴ Electoral Rolls for 1930 and 1933 on ancestry.com.au (accessed 2/2/2014)

²⁵ *Barrier Mine* 29 June 1942 p.3: *Cairn Post* 24 June 1942 p.6: *Advocate* 24 June 1942, p.5: www.wv2roll.gov.au (accessed 2 February 2014)

²⁶ Electoral Roll for 1954 on ancestry.com.au (accessed 2 February 2014)

²⁷ Millington Cemetery Records – www.millingtons.com.au/records-search (accessed 2 February 2014)

Philip Johnson was another indigenous soldier who found life tough post-war. By 1934 he was living on the mainland and appears to have moved from job to job in rural Victoria working as a farm hand. By 1946 he was described by the *Argus* as an invalid pensioner living in a hut on a property about six miles from Hastings, where he worked as a general hand. In July 1946 he was sharing the hut with a Terrence McKenzie, but the two men often argued over food, or the lack of it and Johnson's choice of wireless programs. After yet another argument, McKenzie took matters into his own hands on 12 July, and shot Johnson as he returned to the hut. To ensure that he was dead, McKenzie then struck him about the head with an axe.²⁸

During the war years many promises were made by recruiting officers and others on behalf of the Australian government to prospective volunteers and to service personnel, assuring them that they would all be well looked after on their return home to Australia. While it was never spelt out, it has to be assumed that this was meant to apply to all who enlisted, particularly those who served overseas. It is likely that many Aboriginal soldiers wondered to themselves as they returned home, whether or not they would be treated equally – given the same medical care, pensions and other benefits that settler Australians would receive - or whether they would receive discriminatory treatment.

The repatriation status of the Aborigines who had served in the Australian Imperial Force was a question that also vexed the minds of some bureaucrats in the aftermath of the war. While service in the Australian Imperial Force did not change the citizenship status of these veterans, many on their return continued to have their activities restricted by the various state legislation controlling Aborigines, it did, according to Lloyd and Rees, 'give the Aboriginal war veteran entitlement to repatriation benefits.' This was made clear by Deputy Commissioner David Gilbert in 1919, when he pointed out that while an Aborigine who had served in the Australian Imperial Force might still come under the care and supervision of the state Board appointed under the Aborigines Act, he was still 'entitled to the benefits under the Australian Soldiers Repatriation Act', and therefore could not be denied the 'full use and enjoyment of any benefits granted to him' by the Repatriation Department'.²⁹ As Lloyd and Rees fully acknowledge, this would seem a very enlightened policy given the standards of the time: but they also expressed doubts about its implementation, given the dearth

²⁸ *The Argus* 19 July 1946, p4 & 13 August 1946, p.3

²⁹ C. Lloyd and J. Rees, *The Last Shilling: A History of Repatriation in Australia*, p.107

of evidence on how it was applied. It would seem, though, that it might not have been applied equally across the board, with sporadic complaints being made about discrimination against Aboriginal war veterans during the 1920s and 1930s.

Historian Stephen Garton is of a different opinion, stating that indigenous people were the only servicemen and women who were denied a 'right' to benefits under the repatriation act. Garton states that the benefits that they did receive were given as an Act of Grace by the government.³⁰ This was apparently later formalised under the *Native Members of the Forces Benefits Act 1957*. A reading of the *Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act No 37 of 1917* and *No 6 of 1920* does not exclude any group or race from receiving their entitlements under the act. It would seem that, without any other evidence to the contrary, Aboriginal soldiers who had volunteered and been appointed for or employed on active service outside Australia or who were still serving were entitled to benefits under the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act. The Native Members of the Forces Benefit Act, which covers benefits to indigenous soldiers from Papua New Guinea or islands in the Pacific Ocean, makes no reference to Australia's indigenous men and women who served during World War I, casting some doubt on Garton's analysis.³¹

The evidence suggests that these men received the same treatment and the benefits that they were entitled to in the early post-war period if they applied for them. The families of those who had died in action, or of illness, eventually received the entitlements due to them as the next of kin or the beneficiary. But in 1915 and into 1916 this was not always carried out in a timely manner, as bureaucracy came to terms with mass death in war. A reading of the war gratuity files (series P1868) suggests that in all probability the dependents and beneficiaries of Tasmanian Aborigines were paid all the benefits that each was entitled to receive eventually, but not without hiccups along the way, as the case of Ida Miller demonstrates.³²

Ida Miller, widow of Private John Miller, who was reported 'missing in action' at the landing at Anzac Cove, claimed the allotment that he had set aside to provide for Ida and her family.³³ The allotment was only an interim measure, and would only continue until a pension was awarded. In June 1915 the rules were changed, and allotments

³⁰ S. Garton, *Cost of War*, p.75

³¹ www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2004C05615 (accessed 28/1/2014)

³² NAA P1868 series War Gratuity Files

³³ NAA P1868 /1 War Gratuity File #T13336 John William Miller

were to cease 'exactly two months' after notification, though *bona fide* dependents could gain an extension of a further two months.³⁴ At the end of February 1916, the allotment of £4-4-0- that she was receiving suddenly stopped, due to the period of time that had lapsed since her husband was reported missing. With four little children under the age of four years, Ida turned to the head teacher at Kellevie to help her. After being told to apply to the Deputy Commissioner of Pensions, it was decided to re-instate the allotment until such time as a pension could commence. In order to receive the pension, Ida had to wait until after the determination of the Court of Inquiry which sat in Alexandria in June 1916 before being granted 40/- per fortnight, with a further 20/- per fortnight for each of her three sons, and 10/- for her baby daughter.³⁵

Just how Ida was supposed to have supported her family once the allotment was stopped is anyone's guess. Without it, Ida had no other means of support. It would appear that she had moved out of Hobart and into the country, possibly in order to make what little money she did get stretch further with cheaper rent, but this must have left her socially isolated. Ida's experience was not unusual, particularly among the widows and families of those killed in action at the landing at Anzac Cove, who had to wait years in some cases while enquiries were made and determinations put in writing before pensions could begin to be paid.³⁶ Families helped in some cases, but many were forced to go cap in hand to charities, such as the Red Cross, for assistance.

At the outbreak of the war it was not uncommon for a son or sons to be supporting one or both parents when they enlisted. While Australia's current welfare system has made this a thing of the past, as men went off to war many young men sent their mothers an allotment from their pay to continue to support them whilst they were away. On the death of their son, it was up to the mother (or in some cases, the father) to prove that they had been supported by their son for at least 12 months prior to enlistment. Alicia Maynard, mother of Edward, was granted a pension of £2 per fortnight following his death in August 1915. He had allotted his mother 2/6 per day from his pay.³⁷ Eva, Alicia's sister, lost two sons who had also been supporting her. She was granted £2 per fortnight following the death of Frank at Pozieres, and a further

³⁴ P. Stanley, *The Lost Boys of Anzac*, p.245

³⁵ NAA P1868/1 War Gratuity File #T13336 Private John William Miller

³⁶ P. Stanley, *Lost Boys of Anzac* pp.244-251

³⁷ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #2294 Edward Lewis Maynard & P1868 War Gratuity #T13269 Edward Lewis Maynard

40/- when William was killed in action in April 1917. Both women were later paid the war gratuity, deferred pay, and any other entitlements owing.³⁸

As parents came to terms with their loss and sorted out their son's legal affairs, most over time, applied for the war gratuity and other entitlements that might be owed them by the Australian government. Among the Tasmanian Aborigines in this study, two fathers appear not to have applied for the gratuity payment or other entitlements.³⁹ The reason for this is not discernible from the available records. While for some illiteracy may have been an issue for some families, it would not appear to have been so in the case of James Gower, who claimed the gratuity for one son who died of wounds, but not for the other son who died of illness. They may have felt that no amount of money could compensate for the loss of the sons. While the money they received would be small compensation for the loss of their sons, it did in many cases help the dependents, at least in the short term. Depending on the situation of the person applying, some gratuities were paid in bonds, others in cash: Henry William Brown and Peter Mansell both petitioned for the amount owing to be paid to them in cash in order to settle outstanding debts.⁴⁰ There is arguably no reason to suggest that this request was not met.

While all the indigenous Tasmanians involved in this study who lost sons or husbands had entitlements paid directly to them, this was not always the case Australia-wide. In a number of cases, financial benefits that were paid to the soldier or his dependents were controlled by the various state Protectors of Aborigines or even the Repat Department itself, as Aboriginal people were treated as wards of the state. Doreen Kartinyeri quotes one instance where the Repatriation Department controlled the benefits paid to a young girl whose father was killed in action.⁴¹

Using information taken from the Personnel Dossiers, the evidence suggests that, initially at least, the amounts paid to the Tasmanian Aborigines were in line with that set out in the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act of 1920, given their disability and

³⁸ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #1153 Frank Maynard & P1868 War Gratuity #T13270
Frank Maynard: B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #6311 William Samuel Maynard & P1868
#T13271 William Samuel Maynard

³⁹ James Gower claimed the gratuity for his son John Donald Gower who died of wounds in July 1916, but appears not to have put in a claim for William Harold Gower who died of illness in November 1918

⁴⁰ NAA P1868 #T12236 Brown, Marcus Black Norman 40th Battalion, Application for War Gratuity and NAA P1868 #T5351, Mansell Morgan 40th Battalion, Application for War Gratuity

⁴¹ D. Kartinyeri, *Ngarrindjeri Anzacs*, pp.30-31

rank on discharge. The process of accessing health care through the Repat, including pensions, was for most a very confronting process. Once more, it was the soldiers' bodies that were the site of contestation, as these men demanded compensation for their service. An interesting paradox had arisen between the virile masculine image of the bronzed Anzac and that of the amputated, neurasthenic, debilitated veteran reliant on assistance from the Repatriation authorities. For some, the receipt of a pension validated the veteran's claims and authenticated the severity of their experience. A small group of men from this study, who had sustained wounds which were still not healed on their return or, as in the case of James Anderson, had suffered a permanent disability, were granted pensions upon being discharged. These benefits were only paid for as long as the person was unfit for work, and only at a set rate depending on the level of disability. Once a person was seen to be improving, the rate of pension paid was reduced.

The Personnel Dossiers indicate that at the very least, a Personal Case File (P107) was created for most of the men who returned: but not all, it seems, would make any further claims on the Repat. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many returned veterans refused to have anything further to do with the military or any agency connected to it, such as the Repat, once they had been given their discharge papers. It may be the case that some of the men in this study held a similar attitude. According to one document provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to the author, at least five men who were wounded in action do not appear to have made any claims once they were discharged. This list includes Frederick William Brown, who died in 1931 aged 50: a further seven also appear not to have made any further claim. Poor literacy skills might explain why William Elmer, who according to his obituary notice, suffered poor health as a result of his 'war disabilities', had not made any further claims.⁴² Remoteness, such as in the case of George Enos Mansell or James Henry Maynard, who at various times lived on either Flinders Island or Cape Barren Island, might partly explain why they did not make a claim.⁴³

In order to apply for benefits veterans needed to request the appropriate forms be sent and then contact an accredited doctor (Local Medical Officer) to undertake a

⁴² *Advocate*, 27 August 1941, p.2. The same article did make reference to him being involved in the Latrobe RSL who made his funeral arrangements

⁴³ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #5149 George Enos Mansell & #7314 James Henry Paul Maynard

cursory medical examination to ascertain any incapacity in line with the veteran's claim. Upon receipt of the doctor's report, arrangements would then be made for the person to be examined by a Medical Officer from the Department, at which time a detailed examination would be made, which might include X-rays, blood tests and reports from other specialists. The next step in the process, and possibly the most important, was the compilation of the reports to assess the nature of any incapacity, the extent of the incapacity, and whether it was due to war service. This information was then sent to the Board for approval or rejection.

As part of the examination process, the veteran was asked to state their service history and the cause of their incapacity, which was then compared with their medical records. The onus of proof was put onto the veteran, who then had to use his body to prove his claim that his injury or illness was due to, or had been aggravated by, his war service. Claims for problems such as breathing difficulties that had not been reported whilst on active service were often difficult to prove and were an area of contestation as well as conflict of opinion in examination. For many, the whole process was disempowering and even alienating, particularly when claims were rejected. For those who had their claims accepted: it was then necessary under the Repatriation regulations to reduce the incapacity or suffering to a number that equated to a particular pension rate.

In addition to pensions and health care, a range of services that aimed at getting men back into employment was also established. A number of politicians, including William Mahoney (the member for Dalley in the House of Representatives), told his fellow members of the chamber that if Australia wanted men to enlist, then they needed to be able to show that when the soldiers returned from the front, there would be work for them.⁴⁴ As soldiers started to return to Australia, many realised that it was of utmost importance for their rehabilitation and self-esteem that these men be returned to the workforce as soon as possible. It was also in the country's interest that they returned to work, both financially and socially, as the men and women tried to reintegrate themselves back into a society that had changed markedly while they were away.

⁴⁴ William Mahoney, Member for Dalley, New South Wales, to the House of Representatives, 11 April 1918, Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates, Session 1917-18-19, Second Session of the Seventh Parliament, Vol LXXXIV, Senate and House of Representatives, p.3831

Not every soldier required assistance from the Repatriation Department to secure employment on their return. Men who were fit and healthy and had employment to which they could return, required little or no assistance from the Repat. But for many others, this was not the case, and a lack of meaningful employment proved to be a major obstacle to their reintegration into society. While on the one hand they had been feted as heroes of the nation, as breadwinners, they were a failure, relying on sustenance allowances from the Repatriation Department in order to survive while they looked for work. At the end of the war the labour market was much tougher for those who had been unemployed before the war. These men now felt more marginalised than ever, despite their period of service. Other men suffered discrimination because of incomplete training or study or incapacitation. Men who were able to secure steady employment often found their war experience affected their ability to perform their duties and this opened them up to a different form of discrimination and even job losses.

Tasmania experienced economic decline in the 1920s. This had its inception at about the time many of the men left with the first contingent when there was a serious downturn in the mining industry. Two new industries had begun in the state, the Electrolytic Zinc Company and the Cadbury Chocolate factory: but the state's industrial and manufacturing base remained small and the labour market very tight.⁴⁵ With few opportunities, many of Tasmania's returned soldiers left the state in order to seek employment elsewhere.

In August 1915 the Federal War Committee raised the issue of employment for returning men and the obligations and responsibilities that it had in assisting or providing this. This point was reiterated again in December 1918 by Senator Millen when calling on the Australian public to assist in its 'duty of the nation', impressing on them the importance of providing employment to returning soldiers as part of the repatriation process. He stated that all Australians needed to, and could help with this, including local and state government bodies.⁴⁶ While some men, including William Henry Mansell, had taken up the offer of educational and training programs in Britain

⁴⁵ Electrolytic Zinc Works started in 1916, and Cadbury's confectionery plant in 1920. The building of the latter provided work for many returned soldiers, including the author's grandfather. See A. Alexander, *The Zinc Works: Producing Zinc at Risdon 1916-1991* (Risdon, 1992) and J. Bradley, *Cadbury's Purple Reign : The Story Behind Chocolate's Best-Loved Brand* [Electronic Resource] and <https://www.cadbury.com.au/about-cadbury/cadbury-in-australia.aspx> (accessed 30/7/2014)

⁴⁶ *The Mercury* 18 December 1918, p.4

as they waited for the next boat home, it was not until after they were discharged that the Repatriation Department were prepared to step in or accept some responsibility.⁴⁷ Many who had returned early were at a disadvantage despite calls being made to employers for returned soldiers to be given preference over civilians when employing staff, or issuing contracts long before this was enshrined in legislation.

Employment for returned soldiers became a significant political issue both at a state and federal level. Governor Sir Francis Newdegate, when opening the state Parliament in July 1917, told those present that the repatriation of Tasmania's soldiers was of utmost importance, and that this included finding them employment which was suitable to the individual soldier's requirements and abilities. Sir Francis acknowledged that the state needed to work in partnership with the Commonwealth to put in place training mechanisms to achieve the outcome of finding employment for these men who often could not return to their pre-war employment.⁴⁸

Once the Repatriation Department was established, the onus of finding suitable employment for the returned soldiers became its responsibility. In order for the Repat to help with finding employment, a soldier was required to register with the department and to report on a daily basis until employment was found. If more than a week lapsed before work was found, then a graded sustenance allowance was granted to support the returned soldier. Prior to 1919, this sustenance allowance was generally continued for as long as the returned soldier was looking for work.⁴⁹

On enlistment, over half the Tasmanian Aborigines in this study stated they were employed in some form of semi-skilled or unskilled employment, usually as labourers in the urban or rural sector. A further 17.5 per cent were involved in the rural sector either as farmers or farm labourers, leaving only a small number of men in skilled positions. None who were employed in skilled jobs had any formal qualifications in the form an apprenticeship, the three Sellers brothers for instance, having learnt their trade from their father.

While the Repat was keen to help returned soldiers and was willing to negotiate with former employers and prospective employers on behalf of these men, this was of limited benefit for those who lived outside of the main centres in more remote areas

⁴⁷ According to his Personnel Dossier, William Henry Mansell availed himself of the scheme working for H. Childs, Painters and Decorators, Reading

⁴⁸ *The Mercury* 1 August 1917, p.6

⁴⁹ A. Richardson, *The Long Road Home: Repatriation in Tasmanian 1916-1929*, p.200

such as the islands of Bass Strait. By returning to their island homes, the men from Cape Barren Island and Flinders Island were at a greater disadvantage than those living on mainland Tasmania. With the end of the sealing industry and boat building, two industries that had been important to the Cape Barren Islanders and to the island's economy in providing employment, fewer opportunities were now open to the returned soldiers. Mutton birding was still one source of employment, along with trapping, scratching for tin, and labouring work, either on Flinders Island or mainland Tasmania when available.

The island that the two Burgess boys and the Mansell, Maynard, and Brown cousins had left several years earlier had hardly changed by the time they returned at the end of the war. The Cape Barren Island Act of 1912 had done very little for the living standards of the island's Aborigines, who were still viewed by the government as the 'half-caste' problem. Alfred Burbury, a lawyer working in the Attorney General's Department, was requested to report on the state of the Aborigines in 1929. Burbury noted the low standard of living among the Aborigines, in particular the number of children suffering from sickness including malnutrition. He also determined that the 200 or so odd inhabitants on the Reserve had a combined annual income of around £2,000 with about half of this coming from 'birding', and the remainder from invalid servicemen's and old-age pensions, along with some minor work.⁵⁰

With little opportunity to make a decent living, a number of the veterans and their families eventually left the island, moving mainly to Launceston, where there were better educational and employment opportunities as well as access to better health care. One family moved to Flinders Island, and another to Hobart. One returned soldier who stayed on Cape Barren Island was Henry Brown, who appears to have lived out his days there along with his wife, Clela. Apparently 'Harry Boy', as he was known locally, suffered from the effects of being gassed during the war.⁵¹ He died in 1946, and has a Commonwealth funded war grave in the local cemetery located on a hill just above the settlement at The Corner.⁵²

⁵⁰ I. Skira, *Aboriginals in Tasmania: Living on Cape Barren Island in the Twentieth Century* *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings* 44/3, pp.190-191; see also B. Mollison and Coral Everitt, *A Chronology of Events Affecting Tasmanian Aboriginal People Since Contact By Whites (1772-1976)* (Hobart, 1976) entries for 1929

⁵¹ Molly Mallett, *My Past – Their Future*, p.55

⁵² Grave photographed by the author in February 2014 on visit to Cape Barren Island

The impact of the Depression on the local community ensured that more would move away from the island in the decade that followed. Any dole money made available to the Straitsmen through the Flinders Council was half the rate paid to settler Australians. In order to receive the five shillings a week on offer the men were expected to mend roads, and repaint and renovate their homes, among a range of other things including digging wells and mending fences.⁵³ A series of good mutton bird seasons in the later part of the 1930s saw the island's economy improve, and by the end of the decade the decline in population was reversed – a period seen by some as the 'good times'. Despite this upturn, the returned servicemen continued to leave the island, most moving to Launceston in the hope of securing work and to access better health care as they aged.

While it would seem that Aborigines received the same basic healthcare for their war disabilities or pension benefits through the Repatriation system, one benefit that was apparently unavailable to them was the opportunity to obtain land under the provisions of the Returned Soldier Land Settlement Schemes. This was a major element of the Repatriation 'plan' designed to help returned soldiers settle on the land, provided that the applicant was considered suitable. But the Returned Soldier Land Settlement Schemes were state-based and not controlled by the federal government, and were usually tied to earlier Closer Settlement Acts and Crown Land Acts, as was the case in Tasmania.⁵⁴

All the evidence would suggest that Aborigines were largely excluded from the scheme with two possible exceptions: yet there is no mention in the Tasmanian legislation, or in the legislation and policy governing the Repatriation scheme, that this was the case.⁵⁵ The only exclusions provided in the Tasmanian act were for those who had been discharged 'due to misconduct or incapacity resulting from their own default.'⁵⁶ One possible reason might be that Aborigines were not considered to be 'advanced' enough to take on a Returned Soldier Land Settlement block, with many parcels of

⁵³ L. Ryan, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, p.301

⁵⁴ See George V No. 20 1916 Returned Soldiers Settlement Act 1916

⁵⁵ A. Curthoys, 'National narratives, war commemoration and racial exclusion in a settler society' in T. G. Ashplant, G. Dawson, and M. Roper, eds, *The Politics of War*; According to D. Huggonson when interviewed stated that Gordon Naley got a block of river land in South Australia and George Kennedy got a block near Ivanhoe. Interview on ABC Radio National – transcript accessed on www.abc.net.au/rational/programs/away/we-will-remember-them/3671082 (accessed 5 March 2104). Further research has suggested other names

⁵⁶ George V No. 20 1916 Returned Soldiers Settlement Act 1916, 2.III

land being little more than uncleared bush. As pointed out by Ann Curthoys, the Returned Soldier Land Settlement Scheme 'accelerated the revocation of existing Aboriginal reserve lands for soldier settlers', as in the case of the Lake Condah Mission.⁵⁷ Having taken the land away from the Aborigines, it would have been prudent policy on the part of governments to turn around and then sell it back to them, as part of the Returned Soldier Land Settlement Scheme.

Following the cutting up of the Lake Condah Mission Station in 1945, the Heywood sub-branch of the RSL urged the Victorian minister for lands to have the land given to Aboriginal and 'half-caste' returned servicemen.⁵⁸ The minister responded by stating that he was not prepared to favour one group over another, but would consider any application on its merits. There was no mention that Aborigines were excluded or could not apply.⁵⁹

To be excluded from this scheme struck a nerve with members of the Aboriginal communities, none more so than William Cooper from Victoria, who had lost a son on the Western Front. In a blunt letter to the Federal Minister of the Interior, Cooper reminded the minister of the facts that Aborigines had 'no status, no rights, no land and ... nothing to fight for' should they be asked to do so again as war was imminent: 'but the privilege of defending the land which was taken from him by the white race without compensation or kindness.'⁶⁰ Being excluded from the Returned Soldier Land Settlement Scheme still hurt some, many years later, as another generation took up the fight. John Lovett, son of Herbert Stahle Lovett who served in two world wars, claimed a large sum in compensation 'to rectify the wrong committed' which denied his father natural justice. 'Rather than being able to raise his family on his own land', Herbert Lovett 'was forced to build a house out of condemned buildings that he dragged through the bush' following the breaking up of the former Lake Condah mission.⁶¹

⁵⁷ A. Curthoys, 'National narratives, war commemoration and racial exclusion in a settler society', p.133

⁵⁸ Returned and Services League Australia. It was formerly the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia which was formed in 1916 by representatives from Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. New South Wales joined in 1917 and Western Australia in 1918

⁵⁹ *The Australian* 29 August 2012, online version

⁶⁰ A. Jackomos and D. Fowell, *Forgotten Heroes: Aborigines at war from the Somme to Vietnam*, p.9

⁶¹ *The Australian* 29 August 2012, online version

One organisation that came to the defence of Aboriginal returned soldiers was the RSL (RSSILA). Despite being a strong advocate of the 'White Australia' policy, it had a record of defending the interests of Aborigines who had fought for their country, seeking full citizenship rights on their behalf and a lifting of a restriction on the right to drink alcohol. By 1961, in a letter to the Prime Minister, the national secretary stated that it was the belief of the RSL that as Aborigines 'were advanced enough to share the dangers of active service they are, by the same token, sufficiently advanced to cope with the privileges and responsibilities of full citizenship.'⁶² Many branches welcomed Aboriginal ex-servicemen, but not all. As the national organisation did not have a policy specifically preventing branches from excluding Aboriginal ex-servicemen from membership, it was left up to the attitude of local communities and club members to determine their own policy. While some RSL Sub-branches might have been willing for the Aboriginal ex-servicemen to be members of their organisation, there was on the whole very little or no public or private support on their return.

At least two men from this study are known to have been members of the RSL: there may well have been others. It appears that the Launceston Sub-branch was prepared to accept Straitsmen as members. In 1939 the branch secretary placed a funeral notice for William Mansell, who died at Launceston, requesting his comrades to attend his service at Carr Villa Cemetery.⁶³ At around the same time, James Maynard was photographed by Norman Tindale proudly sporting his RSL badge on the lapel of his coat. How many of the men from this study joined this conservative organisation is unclear. For some, the RSL may have provided an advocacy service when dealing with the Repatriation Department given the adversarial nature of the system, ensuring that the men and their families continued to receive their full entitlements.

In the late 1930s as war clouds gathered over Europe, at least six men from this study volunteered to serve in the military. All, now in their mid to late 40s, were too old for frontline duties, but apparently still saw it as their duty to serve, even if it was at home, and in one of the Garrison Battalions. Charles Miller enlisted as a Warrant Officer Class

⁶² A. Curthoys, 'National narratives, war commemoration and racial exclusion in a settler society' p.136

⁶³ *Examiner*, 15 September, 1939, p.2

2 in the 6th Garrison Battalion. He was later discharged but re-enlisted, and was staff sergeant at the Hobart Fortress, Volunteer Defence Corps.⁶⁴

Without accessing the medical and pension records for the Repatriation Department it is difficult to know to whether the men in this study received their full entitlements on return and continued to do so for the rest of their lives. There is some evidence from the Personnel Dossiers to suggest that those men who returned with injuries were provided with benefits for a limited period of time at least, and that the benefits extended to their families in line with Repatriation Department policy as laid out in the Australian Soldier's Repatriation Act of 1920. Families who applied for the entitlements and war gratuity for those died whilst on active received what monies were due to them, whether in bonds or in cash, paid out in lump sums, and without the controls placed on some by the Repatriation Department. Henry 'Harry Boy' Brown's family applied successfully for his cause of death to be accepted as war service related, and he was later provided with an official war grave paid for by the Commonwealth government. Towards the end of his life, James Henry Paul Mansell seems to have successfully applied for a T.P.I. (Totally and Permanently Incapacitated) pension, recognising that he was totally and permanently incapacitated due to his war service. On the surface at least, it would appear that the Tasmanian Aborigines who served in the First World War were treated equally by the Repatriation Department in terms of the provision of health care and pensions, as well as being given war graves when eligible. In this respect, their treatment on return appears to have contrasted with their experience on active service.

⁶⁴ Clifford William Gower – N273866 –enlisted 28 July 1941 and discharged 23 June 1942; Harold John Holt – T30864 – enlisted 19 March 1941 and discharged 2 February 1944; Leo Joseph Kennedy – T255682 – enlisted 4 January 1940 and discharged 31 October 1943; James Vivian Mansell – T255863 – enlisted 30 April 1940 and discharged 20 January 1943 and Charles Arthur James Miller – T255431 – enlisted 7 November 1939 and discharged 4 January 1944 and T156791- enlisted 4 January 1944 and discharged 27 September 1945



Illustration 26: Julian Clifford Everett, son of George and Julia Maynard and raised by his aunt Lucy Jane Everett.

Enlisted on 23 June 1916 and was allotted to the 12th Battalion. Returned to Australia in May 1918 with Pulmonary Tuberculosis

Source: Frances Rhodes



Illustration 27: Edward Lewis Maynard, one of three sons born to David and Alicia Maynard who enlisted and served overseas. Edward enlisted on 21 May 1915 and was allotted to the 15th Battalion. He was killed in action on 8 August 1915 at Gallipoli.

Source: Frances Rhodes

Illustration 28: Frank Thomas Cohen Maynard from Flinders Island enlisted on 5 May 1915.

He was killed in action at Pozieres on 30 August 1916 and is buried in the Sunken Road Cemetery, Contalmaison, France.

Source: Frances Rhodes



Illustration 29: Marcus Blake Norman Brown from Cape Barren Island. He enlisted on 27 June 1916 and was allotted to the 40th Battalion. Died of wounds received at Messines and is buried in St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen.

Source: Frances Rhodes



Conclusion

‘Have you news of my boy Jack?’
 Not this tide.
“When do you think that he’ll come back?”
 Not with this wind blowing ...
‘Oh dear what comfort can I find?’
 None this tide,
 Nor any tide,
 Except he did not shame his kind –
Not even with that wind blowing, and that tide,
 Then hold your head up all the more,
 This tide,
 And every tide;
 Because he was the son you bore
*And gave to the wind blowing and that tide.*¹

This poem was written by Rudyard Kipling after receiving news that his son was missing in action. While personal to Kipling, it might well have been composed for any number of other parents or wives who waited for news of their loved ones who were ‘missing in action’. In some cases they would have to wait until the end of the war and beyond.² Many families sought some comfort in knowing where their loved one had been laid to rest, but for the thousands listed as ‘missing in action’ there would be no grave—a place that one day they might visit—just a name on a memorial.

No tide was going to bring comfort to Ida Miller and her 4 little children as they endured a long wait for news of her husband, Private John Miller, who was declared ‘missing in action’ after the landing at Suvla Bay. The waiting was made harder still when a letter from her husband turned up later, written before the landing. It would not be until after a Court of Inquiry had been held in Alexandria in June 1916 that she was officially notified that her husband had been killed in action.³ The wait to receive a photograph of his grave would be longer still, as his remains were not found or identified until October 1922 when she was informed that he was now buried at Baby 700 Cemetery, Anzac.⁴

¹ Poem by Rudyard Kipling in 1916 after the loss of his son Jack. Printed in D. Crane *Empires of the Dead: How one man’s vision led to the creation of WWI’s War Graves* (London, 2013), p.180

² See examples cited in P. Stanley’s *Lost Boys of Anzac*

³ NAA B2455/1 Personnel Dossier #1227 John William Miller

⁴ This cemetery is located 1860 yards north east of Anzac Cove

Between 1914 and 1918 over 800 Australian Aborigines were accepted into the first Australian Imperial Forces.⁵ Many more volunteered but were rejected on account of their Aboriginality, particularly when recruiting officers enforced the regulation that only men of substantial European origin could be accepted for enlistment. In 1917 when the number of men volunteering had dropped considerably, and at the same time the casualty rates had increased dramatically, the military authorities were forced to reconsider their stance and to accept men who were considered to be 'half-castes' (that is, were of Aboriginal descent but had a European parent) in order to be able to fulfil the quota of reinforcements required by the military. Those who were considered to be 'full-blood' Aborigines were still not welcome: but as noted by Aboriginal Protector J. W. Bleakley from Queensland, some of the darkest 'half-castes' he had ever seen volunteered for service.⁶ Acceptance or otherwise was often left up to the discretion of the District Commandant, who had the final say.

Within days of the recruiting depots opening following the declaration of war, Aborigines came forward offering to enlist. Around 12 per cent of these men were discharged as 'having been irregularly enlisted' due to the fact that they were considered not to be of 'substantial European origin.' Such a notation was the preserve of mainland Aborigines, and does not appear on any of the Tasmanian attestation papers. Others were also discharged for a variety of reasons: but it is quite possible that some of these were used to cover up the fact that recruiting officers were simply following the regulations, but did not want to be seen as being racist.

There were many factors that informed Aboriginal men's decisions to volunteer for enlistment. For some there were financial motives, particularly those who were employed in low paid itinerant labouring type jobs. The Australian Imperial Force offered these men a regular pay for the duration of the war plus four months, as well as being clothed, fed and a chance to travel. In addition, they could put aside part of their wages to be collected when they returned home. Whether living in rural Tasmania or on one of the Bass Strait islands, the Australian Imperial Force offered many Aboriginal men a way out of their poverty trap with the hope of a better life at the end of the day, if they lived long enough. This in large part may account for the

⁵ This number will most likely rise as more research is undertaken

⁶ J. W. Bleakley, *The Aborigines of Australia*, (Brisbane, 1961), p.170

disproportionately high rate of enlistment by Tasmanian Aboriginal men at 24.6%, compared with 7.9% of the wider Tasmanian male population.

For others there was a certain amount of social pressure, particularly those who had some previous military training. When war was declared in August 1914 recruiting officers were looking for men with previous experience either having fought in the Boer War (South African War) or through the compulsory military scheme that had been in place since 1911. Young men like Jack Hearps from Queenstown who had been in the militia when war was declared, and had some knowledge of how the military operated. No doubt when the men of Queenstown's local 91st Battalion were informed that war had been declared and that a contingent was being formed to go overseas, there would have been subtle pressure applied for every fit, single man to do their duty and volunteer.

It may well be that Captain James Bladon applied his own form of social pressure on the young men of Cape Barren Island. Bladon, prior to taking up the post of school teacher on the island had been instrumental in the formation of a militia at the hamlet of Bangor outside of Launceston. In 1911 Bladon had been keen to form a similar group among the Straitsmen when the compulsory cadet system was introduced, believing that it would benefit the local youths by imbuing them with the 'principles of discipline and patriotism'.⁷ While his idea was thwarted due to a lack of numbers, when war was declared Bladon was in a position of authority within the community under the Cape Barren Island Act of 1912, and was therefore able to encourage some of the island's fit young men to do their 'patriotic duty' and enlist.⁸ Just what encouragement Bladon might have offered the young Straitsmen to volunteer history does not record, but nine of these men paid the ultimate price, while the lives of the survivors were changed forever by the impact of their wartime experience.

It would appear that many Aborigines like John Kicket from Western Australia hoped that through enlisting, when they returned home they might be able to become Australian citizens and enjoy the associated benefits, such as being entitled to vote and to move around the country, free from the controls of the Aboriginal Protector. On arriving back in Australia, Aborigines soon realised that little had

⁷ RS 40/1 Papers relating to Cape Barren Island 1902-1928, University of Tasmania Archives

⁸ For a small community to send away 18 men (17 Aborigines and 1 settler Australian) was a considerable contribution to the war effort

changed. William Cooper, from the Cummeragunga Mission, Victoria whose son Dan had been killed in action, witnessed first-hand the rejection that Aboriginal soldiers suffered on their return to Australia. In 1933, at the age of 71 he set up the Australian Aborigines League, one of the first Aboriginal-controlled protest groups.⁹ With the support of sympathetic trade unions and other Aborigines from around Australia, the League petitioned the Federal and state governments for improvements in the social and political conditions for Aborigines. It would require a long struggle for Aborigines achieve their dreams of citizenship in their own country.

Once accepted into the Australian Imperial Forces, Aborigines were given the same uniform, rates of pay, rations and equipment as settler Australians. This has led many historians to express the view that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal soldiers were treated equally and that there was no discrimination within the Australian Imperial Forces. There is also some retrospective anecdotal evidence that suggests that settler Australians accepted Aboriginal servicemen as social equals. A number of readers of *Reveille* answered a request for information on Aboriginal soldiers, mentioning men whom they had served with in positive terms. One who had initially not been willing to share a table with an 'abo' [*sic*] on the troopship to England soon changed his mind and the two men became lifelong friends.¹⁰ Prior to this thesis, however, no attempt had been made to quantitatively test these assumptions.

While little corroborating evidence could be located, particularly among the records held by the Australian War Memorial or National Archives, an analysis of the figures derived from the Personnel Dossiers belonging to the men in the four cohorts examined by this study strongly suggest that Aboriginal servicemen may have been discriminated against. While Australian Aborigines made up only around 0.4 per cent of the total number of men enlisting in the Australian Imperial Forces, they had a much higher risk of being either killed or wounded in action. One Aboriginal serviceman in this study was wounded for between every 2,666 days and 2,733 days served: by comparison, settler Australians served between 3,414 and 4,240 days per reported wounding. Aboriginal Tasmanian soldiers were particularly at risk. They served 2,733 days per death compared to 6,116 days for their mainland counterparts.

⁹ A. Jackamos and D. Fowell, *Forgotten Heroes; Aborigines at War from the Somme to Vietnam*, pp.9-10

¹⁰ Lieutenant C. D. Clark, 'Aborigines in the First A.I.F.' *Army Journal*, No. 286, March 1973

This does suggest that Tasmanian Aborigines were exposed to a great deal of active service. Despite this they received relatively little reward. Promotion was one area where Aboriginal soldiers were under-represented. Alfred Hearps from Queenstown is the only Aboriginal officer who has been identified so far, but it is possible, as suggested by Winegard, that two other men were commissioned in the field.¹¹ A lack of education might help to explain why only a small number of Aborigines were promoted above the rank of private. Indeed, a comparison with other lowly skilled recruits reveals that few who had worked in manual jobs before the war were promoted. It is also possible, however, that the military hierarchy was reluctant to promote soldiers of indigenous descent, fearing a backlash from the men serving under them.

Away from the modifying constraints of home and their local communities, Australian soldiers earned the reputation of being high-spirited when out of the line. In the front line they were considered to be fighters *par excellence*. A Tasmanian Aboriginal soldier was three times more likely to appear before a court martial when compared with the other cohorts. This was particularly the case with charges of being absent without leave. It is perhaps worth bearing in mind, however, that all conviction data reflects the rate at which different groups are prosecuted. It would be a mistake to infer that Aboriginal servicemen were more likely to offend on the basis of this information. It is certainly the case that no reluctance was shown in prosecuting them.

Clearly, sermons on purity and how to prevent contracting venereal disease generally had only a minimal impact on the men of the Australian Imperial Forces. To relieve the tensions of war when out of the line, men often sought the company of women to help them forget the horrors of war. As a result, Australian soldiers contracted venereal diseases at an alarming rate, to the point where it was a serious problem for the military, with large numbers of men out of the front line receiving treatment at any given time. The Tasmanian Aboriginal soldiers exhibited the highest diagnosis rates of the four cohorts. The data suggests that prostitutes were just as happy to take the money of an indigenous man as from any other soldier. As with court martial rates, however, it is also possible that the disparity reflects the degree to which the bodies of Aboriginal soldiers were subjected to medical scrutiny.

¹¹ T. C. Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War*, p199

A similar picture emerges once these men were discharged. It would seem that all who had served were eligible for the same repatriation benefits under the Australian Soldiers Repatriation Act.¹² Apparently, according to the Deputy Commissioner there was nothing in the local acts in use at the end of the war that precluded Aborigines from the full use and enjoyment of any benefits or entitlements.¹³ Sporadic complaints were received about discrimination against Aboriginal war veterans during the 1920s and 1930s, but with little evidence to back these assertions. One vocal critic was William Cooper, who had lost his son during the war. In a letter to the Federal Minister for the Interior dated 1939, he highlighted the point that Aboriginal war veterans were not entitled to land under the Soldier Settlement Scheme.¹⁴

Many of the Aboriginal war veterans had come from rural areas. If they returned to such places, their access to assistance in gaining employment and to health care and other benefits was greatly reduced when compared to those living in urban areas. For the Aboriginal war veterans who returned to their families on Cape Barren Island, for example, accessing health care under the Repatriation system at the Launceston General Hospital required them to travel to Launceston by boat some distance away. The same situation applied when they needed to be assessed.

The role of Australia's indigenous peoples in the First Australian Imperial Force is an area of military history that has only been touched on briefly to date. While this thesis has largely confined itself to Tasmanian Aborigines, there is a need for a comprehensive scholarly work on the role of Aboriginal soldiers in the First World War along similar lines to that of John Williams or Alastair Kennedy.¹⁵ Such a volume could usefully explore the different situations in each of the states in relation to Aboriginal populations, including legislation and regulation, and then move on to examine in detail every aspect of the enlistment of Australian Aborigines in the First World War—

¹² *Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Act*, Acts of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1917, No. 37

¹³ NAA A2487 1919/3202 Position of Australian Aboriginal Soldiers, memorandum dated 12 April 1919 from the Comptroller to the Deputy Comptroller, Department of Repatriation

¹⁴ A. Jackomos and D. Fowell, *Forgotten Heroes: Aborigines at War from the Somme to Vietnam*, pp.9-10

¹⁵ J. Williams, *German Anzacs and the First World War* and Alastair Kennedy, 'Outwitting Bill Hughes and the White Australia Policy' *Sabretache*, Volume LIII, No. 4 December 2012, pp.15-25

including their time in the front line. The experiences of these men in the front line and upon return home do not figure in the current literature, and are areas deserving of more thorough exploration.

On a recent trip to Cape Barren Island I visited Bung's Beach. Here the tides brought in the beautiful tiny shells that are prized by the Tasmanian Aboriginal women for use in their necklaces. At the time of the First World War Aboriginal women scoured the tide line for the shells while waiting for their washing to dry. Tides were an integral part of island life at a time when boats were the only way of getting to and from the island. The young men who left Cape Barren Island would have done so in boats travelling to Launceston, and returned home using the same means. Boats would have in most cases also brought news of the war to the people of the island, supplementing the news that they picked up through the Wireless Station located on Flinders Island.¹⁶ This was not always very timely as in the case of Peter Mansell who, on reading the *Examiner*, learned of the death of his son Thomas from illness.

While George Brown, Marcus Brown, John Fisher, Morgan Mansell, Thomas Mansell, Edward Maynard, brothers Frank and William Maynard, and George Robinson would not be returning to their Island home on any tide, they, like Kipling's son, did not shame their families either.

Lest We Forget!

¹⁶ Frank Maynard stated that he was guarding the 'Wireless Station' on Flinders when he decided to enlist in May 1915. Public radio in Australia did not arrive until 1923.

Images of Cape Barren Islander Servicemen taken by Norman Tindale in 1939

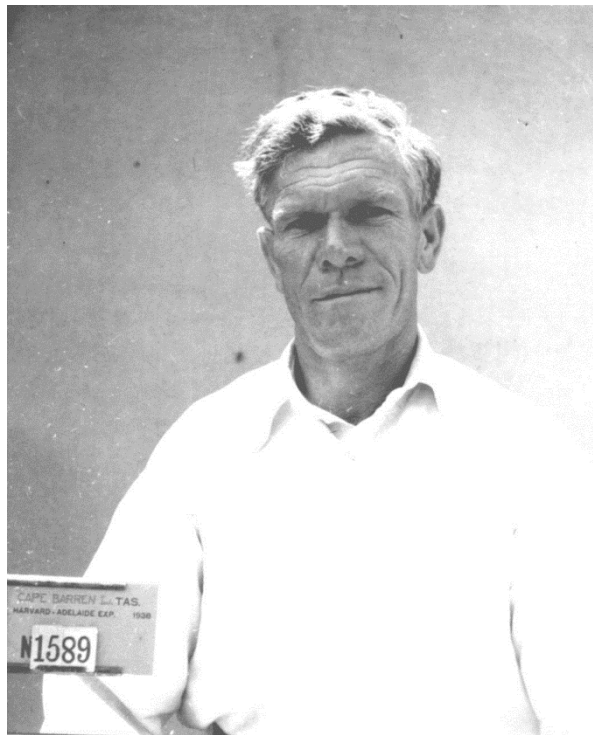


Illustration 30: Claude Eyre Brown son of William and Mary Ann Brown enlisted on 24 June 1916 and was allotted to the 12th Battalion. He returned to Australia in 1917 due to deafness and did not see active service.

Claude died in 1954 and is buried at Carr Villa Cemetery in an unmarked grave.

Source: Museum of South Australia

Illustration 31: Henry George Brown son of Henry and May Brown enlisted on 25 January 1916 and allotted to the 12th Battalion.

He was wounded in action twice - at Mouquet Farm in 1916 and again in December 1916. He returned to Australia in May 1917 with shell shock and concussion.

Henry died in 1947 and is buried at The Corner Cemetery

Source: Museum of South Australia





Illustration 32: James Henry Paul Maynard son of Long Island Jim Maynard and Ada nee Everett. James enlisted on 20 September 1916 and was allotted to the 12th Battalion. Seen here wearing his RSL badge.

He was wounded in action in July 1918. He returned to Australia in July 1919 and died in 1953. He is buried at Carr Villa Cemetery in an unmarked grave.

Source: Museum of South Australia



Illustration 33: William 'Willy Boy' Henry Mansell, son of William and Florence, enlisted on 9 February 1917 and allotted to the 40th Battalion. Treated in England for heart problems. Returned to Australia in June 1919.

This image was taken not long before he died in 1939 due to his war service and is buried in Carr Villa Cemetery

Source: Museum of South Australia

Black Anzacs

They have forgotten him, need him no more
He who fought for his land in nearly every war
Tribal fights before his country was taken by Captain Cook
Then went overseas to fight at Gallipoli and Tobruk
World War One, Two, black Anzacs were there
France, Europe's desert, New Guinea's jungles, did his share
Korea, Malaya, Vietnam, again black soldier enlisted
Fight for democracy was his duty he insisted
Back home went his own way, not looking for praise
Like when he was a warrior in the forgotten days
Down on the Gold Coast a monument in the Bora Ring
Recognition at last his praises they are starting to sing
This black soldier who never marches on ANZAC Day
Living in his Gunya doesn't have much to say
Thinks of his friends who fought, some returned, some died
If only one day they could march together side by side
His medals he keeps hidden away from prying eyes
No-one knows, no-one sees the tears in his old black eyes
He's been outcast, just left by himself to die
Recognition at last black ANZAC, hold your head high
Every year at Gold Coast's Yagambah Bora Ring site
Black ANZAC in uniform and medals a magnificent sight
The rock with Aboriginal totem paintings inset
The Kombumerri people's inscription of LEST WE FORGET

Poem by Cecil Fisher

AWM PR91/263

Collection of Poems by Cecil Fisher

Name	Occupation	Unit on enlistment	Date of enlistment	Promoted	Killed in action	Wounded in Action	Court Martial Appearances	Diagnosed with VD	Returned to Australia
Anderson, James Henry	Labourer	40 th Battalion	7 October 1915	No.	No	Yes	Yes x 4	No	1918 – wounds
Anderson, Percy Alfred	Miner	General Service Regt	2 October 1918	No	No	No	No	No	Did not embark
Aulton, Gordon	Labourer			No	No	No	No	No	MT1486/1
Brown, Claude Eyre	Labourer	12 th Battalion	24 June 1916	No	No	No	No	No	1917 – deafness
Brown, Frederick William	Labourer	40 th Battalion	6 December 1916	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	1919
Brown, George Ernest	Labourer		17 June 1915	No	No	No	No	No	Died before embarking
Brown, Henry George William	Farm Labourer	12 th Battalion	25 January 1915	No	No	Yes x 2	Yes	No	1917 – shell shock
Brown, Marcus Blake Norman	Labourer	40 th Battalion	27 June 1916	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Died of wounds @ Rouen
Brown, Willard Stanley	Labourer		27 June 1916	No	No	No	No	No	Discharged false statement of age
Burgess, Alan Montgomery	Fireman	40 th Battalion	24 June 1916	No	No	Yes x 2	Yes	Yes	1919

Burgess, Sydney	Farm Labourer	12 th Battalion	25 January 1916	No	No	Yes x 3	No	No	1919
Cox, Douglas Lancell Keith	Labourer		8 July 1915	No	No	No	Yes x 7	No	Discharged – bad character
Cox, Lionel Garnet	Labourer	8 th Battalion	30 November 1916	No	No	No	Yes	No	Deserted by Dec. 1916
Dyson, Vere Clifton	Labourer	40 th Battalion	8 November 1916	No	Yes	No	No	No	Missing from Oct. 1917
Elmer, William	Miner	40 th Battalion	7 March 1916	No	No.	No	Yes	No	1919
Everett, Benjamin				No	No	No	No	No	MT1486/1
Everett, Julian Clifford	Farmer	12 th Battalion	23 June 1916	No	No	No	No	No	1918 – TB
Farrell, Richard	Dealer	40 th Battalion	13 October 1917	No	No	No	No	No	1919
Fisher, George Godfrey	Seaman	4 th Machine Gun Company	23 June 1916	No	No	No	Yes x 6	No	1918 – debility
Fisher, John Albert	Seaman	40 th Battalion	20 June 1916	No	Yes		No	No	Died of wounds Oct. 1917
Gower, Clifford William	Labourer	12 th Battalion	12 May 1917	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	1919

Gower, John Donald	Labourer	12 th Battalion	10 August 1915	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Died of wounds July 1916
Gower, William Harold	Labourer	4 th Field Artillery Brigade	28 December 1915	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Died of influenza Nov. 1918
Hearps, Alfred John	Clerk	12 th Battalion	20 August 1914	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Killed in action 19/22 August 1916
Hearps, Charles MM	Labourer	40 th Battalion	17 March 1916	No	No	No	Yes x2	No	1919
Hearps, Cyril Charles	Labourer	26 th Battalion	24 February 1915	No	No	Yes	Yes x 2	Yes	1917 – asthma
Hearps, George Clarence	Blacksmith	12 th Battalion	4 August 1915	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	1918 – gunshot wound to knee
Hearps, Linden Louis	Railway Repairer	1 st Railway Unit	27 November 1917	No	No	No	No	No	1919
Hearps, Wilfred Norton	Livery Stable Proprietor	8 th Field Company Engineers	10 November 1915	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	1919

Holt, Harold John	Farm Labourer	15 th Battalion	20 May 1915	No	No	No	Yes	No	1919
Johnson, Cyril Allen	Labourer	15 th Battalion	19 December 1914	No	Yes	No	No	No	Died of wounds in acc. July 1915
Johnson, George Leonard	Labourer	Corps Troop Signal Company	9 July 1915	No	No	No	Yes x 2	No	1919
Johnson, Jack Roy MM	Butcher	Artillery Details	12 January 1915	Yes	No	Yes x2	Yes	Yes	1919
Johnson, Philip Hilton Elmore	Farmer	26 th Battalion	16 August 1915	No	No	No	Yes	No	1916 – debility
Johnson, Vernon Phillip	Machinist	1 st Battalion	14 April 1915	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	1919 – 1915 Personnel
Kennedy, Cyril James	Carpenter	15 th Battalion	3 September 1915	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	1919
Kennedy, Gilbert Morgan	Cook	3 rd Tunnelling Company	30 November 1916	No	No	No	No	No	1919
Kennedy, John Sydney	Labourer	26 th Battalion	3 September 1915	No	No	No	Yes	No	Deserted Feb 1916

Kennedy, Leo Joseph	Farmer	12 th Battalion	21 June 1917	No	No	No	No	No	1918 – underage
Lee, Edward James	Farmer	3 rd Light Horse	19 October 1916	No	No	No	No	Yes	1919
Mansell, Archie Douglas	Farmer	12 th Battalion	25 January 1916	No	No	Yes x2	Yes x 6	No	1919
Mansell, George Enos	Farmer	12 th Battalion	25 January 1916	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	1919
Mansell, James Vivian Gladstone	Farmer	12 th Battalion	14 December 1915	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	1918 – fractures
Mansell, Ernest Morgan	Labourer	40 th Battalion	6 December 1916	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Died of pneumonia Nov. 1918
Mansell, Silas Morgan	Labourer		23 October 1917	No	No	No	No	No	Discharged – false statement of age
Mansell, Thomas Edward	Farm labourer	12 th Battalion	25 January 1916	No	Yes	No	No	No	Died – influenza Dec. 1916

Mansell, William Henry	Sailor	40 th Battalion	9 February 1917	No	No	No	No	No	1919
Maynard, Cecil Walter Leon	Labourer	57 th Battalion	14 December 1915	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	1919
Maynard, Edward Stafford Lewis	Farmer	15 th Battalion	21 May 1915	No	Yes	No	No	No	KIA – 8 August 1915
Maynard, Francis Thomas Cohen	Farmer	26 th Battalion	24 April 1915	No	Yes	No	No	No	KIA – 30 August 1916
Maynard James Henry Paul	Farmer	12 th Battalion	20 September 1916	No	No	Yes	No	No	1919
Maynard, Leo Victor	Labourer	12 th Battalion	17 June 1915	No	No	No	No	No	1916 – illness
Maynard, Roy Leonard	Labourer	12 th Battalion	21 July 1916	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	1919
Maynard, William Edward Samuel	Mariner	12 th Battalion	19 June 1916	No	Yes	No	No	No	KIA 6-10 April 1917

Medcraft, Herbert William	Labourer		15 April 1918	No	No	No	No	No	Discharged medically unfit
Medcraft, Oscar William	Labourer	12 th Battalion	18 September 1916	No	Yes	No	No	No	KIA 6-10 April 1917
Medcraft, Robert Arthur	Labourer		16 October 1917	No	No	No	No	No	Discharged medically unfit
Miller, Charles Arthur James	Labourer	40 th Battalion	20 September 1916	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	1919
Miller, John William	Labourer	12 th Battalion	19 October 1915	No	Yes	No	No	No	Missing 25-28 April 1915
Miller, William Charles	Labourer	12 th Battalion	23 October 1916	No	No	No	No	No	1919
Rees, Edward	Labourer	12 th Battalion	2 September 1915	Yes	No	Yes x2	Yes x 2	Yes	1919
Robinson, George Collis	Farmer	4 th Machine Gun Company	21 July 1916	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Died of wounds Oct. 1917
Robinson, Horace Frederick	Farmer		21 July 1916	No	No	No	No	No	Discharged medically unfit

Sellers, Earle Hartoule	Blacksmith		13 October 1915	No	No	No	No	Yes	Discharged – worthless
Sellers, George Ira	Blacksmith	14 th Field Ambulance	26 February 1917	No	No	No	No	No	1919
Sellers, Harold Thomas	Blacksmith	40 th Battalion & 3rd Light Horse	24 May 1916; 8 June 1917 & 10 April 1918	No	No	No	Yes x10	No	1918 – medically unfit
Simpson, Stamford Wallace	Farmer	10 th Battalion	28 August 1914	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	1919
Smith, Albert Charles Edward	Labourer	6 th Field Artillery Brigade	3 November 1915	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	KIA – September 1918
Smith, Archibald Willmore	Millwork	6 th Field Artillery Brigade	3 November 1915	No	No	No	Yes x 8	Yes	1919
Smith, Augustus Eugene	Labourer	26 th Battalion	29 July 1915	No	Yes	Yes x2	Yes x 2	No	Died of nephritis Dec 1919
Smith, Ulbert	Farmer	26 th Battalion	17 June 1915	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	KIA Sept 1917

Stanton, Harold Joseph	Labourer	40 th Battalion	6 September 1916	No	No	Yes	No	No	1919
Stanton, William Alfred	Orchardist	40 th Battalion	20 September 1916	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	1919
Vincent, Arthur Wesley	Engine Driver		19 July 1916	No	No	No	No	No	Discharged medically unfit – dental
Waller, Alfred Wallace	Labourer	43 rd Battalion	15 January 1916	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	1919
Waller, Charles Stephen	Seaman	16 th Battalion	14 September 1914	No	Yes		No	No	KIA at Gallipoli – 2-5 May 1915
Waller, Norman Victor	Farmer	43 rd Battalion	15 January 1916	Yes	No	No	No	No	1919

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T255682 Leo Joseph Kennedy

T30864 Harold John Holt

N273866 Clifford William Gower

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B2455 Personnel Dossier for #3427 Frederick William Brown

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B2455 Personnel Dossier for #207 Charles Hearps
B2455 Personnel Dossier for #900 Cyril Charles Hearps
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B2455 Personnel Dossier for #2360 Linden Louis Hearps
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